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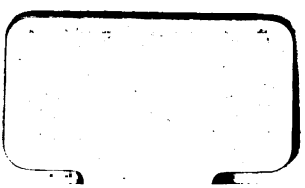

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In Forbes Hardy
the gift of his father.

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Sir J. Reynolds pinx.t J. T. Wedgwood sculp.t

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

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THE

MISCELLANEOUS WORKS

OF

OLIVER GOLDSMITH,

WITH AN

ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE AND WRITINGS.

A NEW EDITION, IN FOUR VOLUMES.

EDITED BY

WASHINGTON IRVING, ESQ.

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MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

THERE are few writers for whom the reader feels such personal kindness as for Oliver Goldsmith. The fascinating ease and simplicity of his style; the benevolence that beams through every page; the whimsical yet amiable views of human life and human nature; the mellow unforced humour, blended so happily with good feeling and good sense, throughout his writings; win their way irresistibly to the affections and carry the author with them. While writers of greater pretensions and more sounding names are suffered to lie upon our shelves, the works of Goldsmith are cherished and laid in our bosoms. We do not quote them with ostentation, but they mingle with our minds; they sweeten our tempers and harmonize our thoughts; they put us in good humour with ourselves and with the world, and in so doing they make us happier and better men.

We have been curious therefore in gathering together all the heterogeneous particulars concerning poor Goldsmith that still exist; and seldom have we met with an author's life more illustrative of his works, or works more faithfully illustrative of

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the author's life.[1] His rambling biography displays him the same kind, artless, good-humoured, excursive, sensible, whimsical, intelligent being that he appears in his writings. Scarcely an adventure or a character is given in his page that may not be traced to his own parti-coloured story. Many of his most ludicrous scenes and ridiculous incidents have been drawn from his own blunders and mischances, and he seems really to have been buffeted into almost every maxim imparted by him for the instruction of his readers.

Oliver Goldsmith was a native of Ireland, and was born on the 29th of November, 1728. Two villages claim the honour of having given him birth: Pallas, in the county of Longford; and Elphin, in the county of Roscommon. The former is named as the place in the epitaph by Dr Johnson, inscribed on his monument in Westminster Abbey; but later investigations have decided in favour of Elphin.

He was the second son of the Rev. Charles Goldsmith, a clergyman of the established church, but without any patrimony. His mother was daughter of the Rev. Oliver Jones, master of the diocesan school at Elphin. It was not till some time after the birth of Oliver that his father obtained the living of Kilkenny-West, in the county of Westmeath. Previous to this period he and his wife appear to have been almost entirely dependent on her relations for support.

His father was equally distinguished for his literary attainments and for the benevolence of his heart. His family consisted of five sons and two daughters. From this little world of home Goldsmith has drawn many of his domestic scenes, both whimsical and touching, which appeal so forcibly to the heart, as well as to the fancy; his father's fireside furnished many of the family scenes of the Vicar of Wakefield; and it is said that the learned simplicity and amiable peculiarities of that worthy divine have been happily illustrated in the character of Dr Primrose.

[1] The present biography is principally taken from the Scotch edition of Goldsmith's works, published in 1821.

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The Rev. Henry Goldsmith, elder brother of the poet, and born seven years before him, was a man of estimable worth and excellent talents. Great expectations were formed of him, from the promise of his youth, both when at school and at college; but he offended and disappointed his friends, by entering into matrimony at the early age of nineteen, and resigning all ambitious views for love and a curacy. If, however, we may believe the pictures drawn by the poet of his brother's domestic life, his lot, though humble, was a happy one. He is the village pastor of the « Deserted Village,» so exemplary in his character, and « passing rich with forty pounds a year.» It is to this brother, who was the guide and protector of Goldsmith during his childhood, and to whom he was tenderly attached, that he addresses those beautiful lines in his poem of the Traveller:

> Where'er I roam, whatever realms to see,
> My heart untravell'd fondly turns to thee;
> Still to my brother turns with ceaseless pain,
> And drags at each remove a length'ning chain.

His family also form the ruddy and joyous group, and exercise the simple but generous rites of hospitality, which the poet so charmingly describes:

> Bless'd be those feasts with simple plenty crown'd,
> Where all the ruddy family around
> Laugh at the jests or pranks that never fail,
> Or sigh with pity at some mournful tale;
> Or press the bashful stranger to his food,
> And learn the luxury of doing good.

The whimsical character of the Man in Black, in the « Citizen of the World,» so rich in eccentricities and in amiable failings, is said to have been likewise drawn partly from his brother, partly from his father, but in a great measure from the author himself. It is difficult, however, to assign with precision the originals of a writer's characters. They are generally composed of scattered, though accordant traits, observed in various individuals, which have been seized upon with the discriminating tact of genius and combined into one harmonious whole. Still,

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it is a fact, as evident as it is delightful, that Goldsmith has poured out the genuine feelings of his heart in his works; and has had continually before him, in his delineations of simple worth and domestic virtue, the objects of his filial and fraternal affection.

Goldsmith is said, in his earlier years, to have been whimsical in his humours and eccentric in his habits. This was remarked in his infancy. Sometimes he assumed the gravity and reserve of riper years, at other times would give free scope to the wild frolic and exuberant vivacity suited to his age. The singularity of his moods and manners, and the evidences he gave of a precocity of talent, caused him to be talked of in the neighbourhood as a little prodigy. It is said that, even before he was eight years old he evinced a natural turn for poetry, and made many attempts at rhymes, to the amusement of his father and friends; and when somewhat older, after he had learned to write, his chief pleasure was to scribble rude verses on small scraps of paper, and then commit them to the flames.

His father had strained his slender means in giving a liberal education to his eldest son, and had determined to bring up Oliver to trade. He was placed under the care of a village schoolmaster, to be instructed in reading, writing, and arithmetic. This pedagogue, whom his scholar afterwards so happily describes in the « Deserted Village,» had been a quarter-master in the army during the wars of Queen Anne, and, in his own estimation, a man of no small pith and moment. Having passed through various parts of Europe, and being of an eccentric turn of mind, he acquired habits of romancing that bordered on the marvellous, and, like many other travellers, was possessed with a prodigious itch for detailing his adventures. He himself was most commonly the redoubted hero of his own story, and his pupils were always the amazed and willing auditory:

> And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew,
> That one small head could carry all he knew.

The tales of wonder recounted by this second Pinto are said to have had surprising effects on his youthful hearers; and it

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has been plausibly conjectured that to the vivid impressions thus made on the young imagination of our author, may be ascribed those wandering propensities which influenced his after life.

After he had been for some time with this indifferent preceptor, his mother, with whom he was always a favourite, exerted her influence to persuade his father to give him an education that would qualify him for a liberal profession. Her solicitations, together with the passionate attachment which the boy evinced for books and learning, and his early indications of talent, prevailed over all scruples of economy, and he was placed under the care of the Rev. Mr Griffin, schoolmaster of Elphin. He was boarded in the house of his uncle, John Goldsmith, Esq., of Ballyoughter, in the vicinity. Here the amiableness of his disposition and the amusing eccentricity of his humour rendered him a universal favourite. A little anecdote, preserved by the family of his uncle, evinces the precocity of his wit.

At an entertainment given by this gentleman to a party of young people in the neighbourhood, a fiddler was sent for, and dancing introduced. Oliver, although only nine years of age, was permitted to share in the festivities of the evening, and was called on to dance a hornpipe. His figure was never good, but at this time it was peculiarly short and clumsy, and having but recently recovered from the small-pox, his features were greatly disfigured. The scraper of catgut, struck with the oddity of the boy's appearance, thought to display his waggery, by likening him to Æsop dancing. This comparison, according to his notions, being uncommonly happy, he continued to harp on it for a considerable time, when suddenly the laugh of the company was turned against himself, by Oliver sarcastically remarking,

> Our herald hath proclaim'd this saying,
> See Æsop dancing, and his monkey playing.

So smart a repartee, from so young a boy, was the subject of much conversation, and perhaps of itself was decisive of his fortune. His friends immediately determined that he should be sent

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to the university; and some of his relations, who belonged to the church, and possessed the necessary means, generously offered to contribute towards the expense. The Rev. Mr Green, and the Rev. Mr Contarine, both men of distinguished worth and learning, stood forward on this occasion as the youth's patrons.

To qualify him for the university, he was now sent to Athlone school, and placed under the tuition of the Rev. Mr Campbell. There he remained two years; but the ill-health of the master having obliged him to resign his situation, Oliver was consigned to the care of the Rev. Patrick Hughes, at Edgeworthstown, in the county of Longford, under whom he continued his studies till finally fitted for the university. Under this respectable teacher and excellent man, he is said to have made much greater progress than under any of the rest of his instructors.

A short time before leaving the school of Mr Hughes, our poet had an adventure which is believed to have suggested the plot of his comedy of « She Stoops to Conquer, or the Mistakes of a Night.»

His father's house was distant about twenty miles from Edgeworthstown, and when on his journey thither for the last time, he had devoted so much time to amusement on the road, that it was almost dark when he reached the little town of Ardagh. Some friend had given him a guinea, and Oliver, who was never niggard of his purse, resolved to put up here for the night, and treat himself to a good supper and a bed. Having asked for the best house in the village, he was conducted to the best *house*, instead of the best *inn*. The owner, immediately discovered the mistake, but being a man of humour, resolved to carry on the joke. Oliver was therefore permitted to order his horse to the stable, while he himself walked into the parlour, and took his seat familiarly by the fire-side. The servants were then called about him to receive his orders as to supper. The supper was soon produced; the gentleman, with his wife and daughters, were generously invited to partake; a bottle of wine was called for to crown the feast, and at going to bed, a hot cake was ordered to be prepared for his breakfast. The laugh, to be sure, was rather against our hero in the morn-

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ing, when he called for his bill, and found he had been hospitably entertained in a private family. But finding that his host was an acquaintance of his father's, he entered into the humour of the scene, and laughed as heartily as the rest.

On the 11th of June, 1744, Goldsmith, then fifteen years of age, was admitted a sizer in Trinity College, Dublin, under the Rev. Theaker Wilder, one of the fellows, a man of violent temper, from whose overbearing disposition he suffered much vexation. The young student was giddy and thoughtless, and on one occasion invited a number of young persons of both sexes to a supper and dance in his apartments, in direct violation of the college rules. The vigilant Wilder became apprised of the circumstance, and rushed like a tiger to the festive scene. He burst into the apartment, put the gay assembly to the rout, but previous to their dispersion, seized on the unfortunate delinquent, and inflicted corporal chastisement on him, in presence of the party.

The youthful poet could not brook this outrage and indignity. He could not look his acquaintances in the face without the deepest feeling of shame and mortification. He determined, therefore, to escape altogether from his terrible tutor, by abandoning his studies, and flying to some distant part of the globe. With this view he disposed of his books and clothes, and resolved to embark at Cork: but here his usual thoughtless and improvident turn was again displayed, for he lingered so long in Dublin after his resolution had been taken, that his finances were reduced to a single shilling when he set out on the journey.

He was accustomed afterwards to give a ludicrous account of his adventures in this expedition, although it was attended by many distressful circumstances. Having contrived to subsist three whole days on the shilling he set out with, he was then compelled by necessity to sell the clothes off his back, and at last was so reduced by famine, that he was only saved from sinking under it by the compassion of a young girl at a wake, from whom he got a handful of gray peas. This he used to say was the most delicious repast he had ever made. While in this state of hunger and wretchedness, without money and without friends, the

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rashness and folly of his undertaking became every moment more apparent, and, in spite of his lacerated feelings, and the dread of Wilder, he resolved to propose a reconciliation with his friends, and once more to return to the college. Before he had reached the place of embarkation, therefore, he contrived to get notice conveyed to his brother of his miserable condition, and hinted that if a promise of milder treatment were obtained from his tutor, he should be inclined to return. His affectionate brother instantly hastened to relieve his distress, equipped him with new clothing, and carried him back to college. A reconciliation was also in some degree effected with Wilder, but there was never afterwards between them any interchange of friendship or regard.

From the despondency resulting from his tutor's ill-treatment, Goldsmith is said to have sunk into habitual indolence; yet his genius sometimes dawned through the gloom, and translations from the classics made by him at this period were long remembered by his contemporaries with applause. He was not, however, admitted to the degree of Bachelor of Arts till February 27, 1749, O. S. two years after the regular time.

The chagrin and vexation attending his unlucky disputes with his tutor, were soon after succeeded by a calamity of deeper moment, and more lasting consequences to our poet. This was the death of his worthy and amiable father. He had now lost his natural guardian and best friend, and found himself young in the world, without either protector or guide. His uncle Contarine, however, in this emergency kindly interfered, and, with almost parental anxiety, took the charge of advising and directing his future progress. When he had completed his studies at the university,[1] Mr Contarine advised him to prepare for

[1] During his studies at the university, he was a contemporary with Burke; and it has been said that neither of them gave much promise of future celebrity. Goldsmith, however, got a premium at a Christmas examination; and a premium obtained at such examination is more honourable than any other, because it ascertains the person who receives it to be the first in literary merit. At the other examinations, the person thus distinguished may be only the second in merit; he who has previously obtained the same honorary reward, sometimes receiving a written certificate

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holy orders; but this was a measure always repugnant to his inclinations. An unsettled turn of mind, an unquenchable desire of visiting other countries, and perhaps an ingenuous sense of his unfitness for the clerical profession, conspired to disincline him to the church; and though at length he yielded to the pressing solicitations of his uncle and friends, by applying to the bishop for ordination, it is thought he was more pleased than disappointed when rejected by his lordship, on account of his youth. He was now anxious, however, to be employed in some way or other, and when the office of private tutor in the family of a neighbouring gentleman was offered to him, he willingly accepted it. In this situation he remained about a year; but finding the employment much more disagreeable than he had been taught to believe it, and the necessary confinement painfully irksome, he suddenly gave up his charge, procured a good horse, and, with about thirty pounds which he had saved, quitted his friends, and set out nobody knew whither.

As this singular unpremeditated step had been taken without consulting any of his friends, and as no intelligence could be obtained either of himself or the motives which had prompted his departure, his family became much alarmed for his safety, and were justly offended at his conduct. Week after week passed away, and no tidings came of the fugitive. At last, when all hope of his return had been given up, and when they concluded he must have left the country altogether, the family were astonished by his sudden reappearance at his mother's house; safe and sound, to be sure, but not exactly in such good trim as when he had left them. His horse was metamorphosed into a shabby little pony, not worth twenty shillings, and instead of thirty pounds in his pocket, he was without a penny. On this occasion the indignation of his mother was strongly expressed; but his brothers and sisters, who were all tenderly attached to him, interfered, and soon effected a reconciliation.

Once more reinstated in the good graces of his family, our

that *he* was the best answerer; it being a rule, that not more than one premium should be adjudged to the same person in one year.

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poet amused them with a detail of his adventures in this last expedition. He premised that he had long felt a strong inclination to visit the New World, but knowing that his friends would throw obstacles in the way of his departure, he had determined to set out unknown to any of them. Intending to embark at Cork, he had gone directly thither, and immediately after he arrived disposed of his horse, and struck a bargain with the captain of a ship bound for North America. For three weeks after his arrival, the wind continued unfavourable for putting to sea, and the vessel remained wind-bound in the harbour. In the mean time, he amused himself by sauntering about the city and its environs, satisfying his curiosity, and examining every object worthy of notice. Having formed some acquaintances by means of the captain, he accompanied a party on an excursion into the country. The idea never occurred to him, that the wind which had blown so perversely a-head during three weeks might change in a single day; he was not less surprised than chagrined, therefore, on his return next morning, to find the vessel gone. This was a death-blow to his scheme of emigration, as his passage-money was already in the pocket of the captain.

Mortified and disappointed, he lingered about Cork, irresolute what to do, until the languishing state of his purse, which was reduced to two guineas, admonished him to make the best of his way home. He accordingly bought a poor little pony, which he called Fiddleback, and found that he had just five shillings left to defray the travelling expenses of himself and his steed. This pittance, however, was rather too scanty for a journey of a hundred and twenty miles, and he was at a loss how to procure a further supply. He at last bethought himself of an old college friend, who lived on the road, not far from Cork, and determined to apply to him for assistance. Having been often pressed by this person to spend a summer at his house, he had the less hesitation in paying him a visit under his present circumstances, and doubted not that he would at once obtain all the aid his situation required. When on the road to the house of his friend, a poor woman with

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eight children, whose husband had been thrown into jail for rent, threw herself in his way, and implored relief. The feelings of humanity being ever most easily awakened in Oliver's bosom, he gave her all that remained in his purse, and trusted his own wants to the expected liberality of his old fellow-collegian.

This dear friend, whose promised hospitalities were so securely relied on, received him with much apparent satisfaction, and only appeared anxious to learn the motive which could have prompted this chance visit. Charmed with the seeming cordiality with which he was received, Oliver gave him an artless and honest account of his whole expedition; and did not even conceal the offence which his departure must have given to his friends. His good host listened with profound attention, and appeared to take so much interest in the detail of our poet's adventures, that he was at length induced to disclose the immediate object of his visit. This chanced to be the true touchstone for trying the liberality of so honest a friend. A profound sigh, and querulous declamation on his own infirm state of health, was the only return to his hint for assistance. When pressed a little further, this kind friend drily remarked, that for his part he could not understand how some people got themselves into scrapes; that on any other occasion he would have been happy to accommodate an old comrade, but really he had been lately so very ill, and was, even now, in such a sickly condition, that it was very inconvenient to entertain company of any kind. Besides, he could not well ask a person in health to share in his slops and milk diet. If, however, Mr Goldsmith could think of putting up with the family fare, such as it was, he would be made welcome; at the same time he must apprise him that it might not soon be got ready. The astonishment and dismay of our poet at the conclusion of this speech was sufficiently visible in his lengthened visage. Nothing but the utter emptiness of his purse, and his great distance from home, could have induced him to pocket the insult, or accept so inhospitable an invitation. No better, however, could be made of it in his present circumstances; so, without showing his

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chagrin, he good-humouredly partook of a miserable supper of brown bread and butter-milk, served up at a late hour by a miserable-looking old woman, the fit handmaid of so miserable a master.

Notwithstanding the base colours in which our poet's host had exhibited himself, the former had too much good-nature to harbour resentment. When they met in the morning, therefore, he entered familiarly into conversation, and even condescended to ask what he would advise him to do in his present difficulty. «My dear fellow,» said his host, «return home immediately. You can never do without the assistance of your friends; and, if you keep them longer in suspense and alarm, by remaining away, you will only widen the breach which your rashness must have already occasioned, and perhaps induce them to throw you off altogether.» «But,» rejoined Oliver, «how am I to get on without money? I told you I had not a shilling left, and it is quite impossible for me to proceed on the journey, unless you should be so obliging as to lend me a guinea for the purpose.» Here again his friend's countenance fell. He pleaded his inability to lend, in consequence of having spent all his ready cash during his late illness, interlarding this apology with many sage aphorisms on the disadvantages of borrowing, and the sin of running into debt. «But, my dear fellow,» resumed he, «I'll tell you how you may get over the difficulty. May you not sell the little horse you brought with you last night? The price of it will be sufficient for all your expenses till you arrive among your friends, and, in the mean time, I think I can furnish you with another to help you forward on the journey.» Oliver could discover no objection to a plan so feasible, and therefore agreed to it at once; but when he asked for a sight of the steed which was to carry him home, his host, with solemn gravity, drew from under the bed a stout oaken staff, which he presented to him with a grin of self-approbation. Our poor poet now lost all patience, and was just about to snatch it from him, and apply it to his pate, when a loud rap announced a visitor. A person of interesting appearance was immediately afterwards ushered into the room, and, when the usual compliments were

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over, Oliver was presented to him by his host, as if nothing had happened, and described as the learned and ingenious young man of whom he had heard so much while at college.

The agreeable manners of this gentleman soon gave an interesting turn to the conversation. Harmony appeared to be once more restored between Oliver and his host, and the stranger invited them both to dine with him the following day. This was not acceded to on the part of the poet, without considerable reluctance; but the gentleman's pressing solicitations prevailed on him to consent. The hospitality and kindness displayed at this person's table was a striking contrast to the penury and meanness exhibited by his fellow-collegian, and Oliver could hardly refrain from making some sarcastic remarks on the difference. The hints on this subject which were occasionally hazarded by the poet, led the gentleman to suspect that the two friends were not on the most cordial terms. He was therefore induced to invite our poet to spend a few days at his house. An invitation of this kind, so opportunely and handsomely given, was a fortunate circumstance for Oliver. He did not hesitate a moment to accept it, and at parting with his dear fellow-collegian, archly recommended to him to take good care of the steed kept at so much expense for the use of his friends; and, of all things, to beware of surfeiting them with a milk diet. To this sarcasm the other only replied by a sneer at the poet's poverty and improvident disposition. Their host being well acquainted with the character of his neighbour, seemed, when Oliver afterwards recounted to him all the circumstances that had taken place, to be more amused than surprised at the detail.

In the house of this new friend Goldsmith experienced the most hospitable entertainment for several days. Two beautiful daughters, as well as the host himself, were emulous in finding amusement for their guest during his stay; and when about to depart, he was offered money to defray the expense of his journey, and a servant to attend him on horseback. The servant and horse he declined, but accepted of a loan of three half-guineas; and with sentiments of the deepest respect and gratitude, took leave of his benevolent host.

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He now pursued his journey without any further interruption, and arrived at his mother's house in the sudden and unexpected manner already narrated. Once more reconciled to his friends, he did not fail to transmit to his kind benefactor suitable acknowledgments expressive of the grateful sense he entertained of such unlooked-for and generous hospitality.

It was now considered essential that he should fix on a profession, the pursuit of which might divert him from idle and expensive habits. After various consultations, it was determined that he should begin the study of the law, and his uncle Contarine agreed to advance the necessary funds. Provided with money for the expenses of his journey, and to enable him to enter on his studies at the Temple, Oliver set out for London, but his customary imprudence again interfered. He fell by accident into the company of a sharper in Dublin, and being tempted to engage in play, was soon plundered of all his money, and again left to find his way home without a shilling in his pocket.

His friends now almost despaired of him. Notwithstanding the brilliancy of his natural talents, it was feared that his habitual carelessness and improvidence would form a bar to his success in any profession whatever. That it would be vain for him to pursue the study of the law with such dispositions was obvious; and, of course, it was necessary once more to cast about for a profession. After various consultations, therefore, it was finally determined that physic should be his future pursuit; and his kind uncle, who had been prevailed on to pardon him once more, took him again under his protection, and at last fixed him at Edinburgh as a student of medicine, about the end of the year 1752. On his arrival in that city, he had no sooner deposited his trunk in lodgings than he sallied out to see the town. He rambled about until a late hour, and when he felt disposed to turn his face homeward, recollected for the first time that he knew neither the name nor address of his landlady. In this dilemma, as he was wandering at random, he fortunately met with the porter who had carried his baggage, and who now served him as a guide.

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In the University of Edinburgh, at that time becoming famous as a school of medicine, he attended the lectures of the celebrated Monro, and the other professors in medical science. What progress he made in this study, however, is not particularly ascertained. Riotous conviviality, and tavern adjournments, whether for business or pleasure, were at that time characteristic of Edinburgh society; and it does not appear that our poet was able to resist the general contagion. His attention to his studies was far from being regular. Dissipation and play allured him from the class-room, and his health and his purse suffered in consequence. About this period, his contemporaries have reported, that he sometimes also sacrificed to the Muses, but of these early effusions no specimen seems to have been preserved.

The social and good-humoured qualities of our poet appear to have made him a general favourite with his fellow-students. He was a keen participator in all their wild pranks and humorous frolics. He was also a prime table companion: always ready with story, anecdote, or song, though it must be confessed that in such exhibitions he was far from being successful. His narrations were too frequently accompanied by grimace or buffoonery; nor was his wit of that chaste and classical kind that might have been expected from his education. On the contrary, it was generally forced, coarse, and unnatural. All his oral communications partook of these defects; and it is a fact not less true than singular, that even in after life he was never exempt from them, although accustomed to the politest literary society.

When conversing on this feature in our poet's character, his friend Dr Johnson many years afterwards, justly, but perhaps rather severely, remarked, « The misfortune of Goldsmith in conversation is this: he goes on without knowing how he is to get off. His genius is great, but his knowledge is small. As they say of a generous man, it is a pity he is not rich, we may say of Goldsmith, it is a pity he is not knowing: he would not keep his knowledge to himself.»

On another occasion, Johnson being called on for his opinion on the same subject, took a similar view of it, with much cri-

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tical acumen, and all his usual power of amplification. « Goldsmith," said he, « should not be for ever attempting to shine in conversation; he has not temper for it, he is so much mortified when he fails. A game of jokes is composed partly of skill, partly of chance; a man may be beat at times by one who has not the tenth part of his wit. Now Goldsmith's putting himself against another, is like a man laying a hundred to one, who cannot spare the hundred. It is not worth a man's while. A man should not lay a hundred to one, unless he can easily spare it; though he has a hundred chances for him, he can get but a guinea, and he may lose a hundred. Goldsmith is in this state: when he contends, if he get the better, it is a very little addition to a man of his literary reputation; if he do not get the better, he is miserably vexed. »

Though now arrived at an age when reflection on passing objects and events might have been occasionally elicited, yet it does not appear that any thing of that kind worth preserving occurred in our poet's correspondence with his friends. The only circumstance which seems to have excited particular remark was the economy of the Scotch in cooking and eating; and of this he would sometimes give rather a ludicrous account. His first landlady, he used to say, nearly starved him out of his lodgings; and the second, though somewhat more liberal, was still a wonderful adept in the art of saving. When permitted to put forth all her talents in this way, she would perform surprising feats. A single loin of mutton would sometimes be made to serve our poet and two fellow-students a whole week; a brandered chop was served up one day, a fried steak another, collops with onion sauce a third, and so on, till the fleshy parts were quite consumed, when finally a dish of broth was made from the well-picked bones on the seventh day, and the landlady rested from her labours.

After he had attended some courses of lectures at Edinburgh, it was thought advisable that he should complete his medical studies at the University of Leyden, then celebrated as a great medical school: his uncle Contarine furnishing the funds. Goldsmith accordingly looked out at Leith for a vessel for Holland;

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but finding one about to sail for Bordeaux, with his usual eccentricity engaged a passage. He found himself, however, in an awkward dilemma about the time of embarkation. He had become security to a tailor for a fellow-student in a considerable amount. The tailor arrested him for debt; and, but for the interference of Mr. Lachlan Maclane and Dr. Sleigh, he would have been thrown into prison. Rescued from this difficulty he embarked, but encountered a storm, and a detention, and an escape from shipwreck, and finally arrived safe at Rotterdam, instead of Bordeaux: all which is thus related by himself, in an extract from a letter, without date, to his generous uncle Contarine.

« Some time after the receipt of your last, I embarked for Bordeaux, on board a Scotch ship, called the St Andrew, Captain John Wall, master. The ship made a tolerable appearance, and as another inducement, I was let to know that six agreeable passengers were to be my company. Well, we were but two days at sea when a storm drove us into a city of England, called Newcastle-upon-Tyne. We all went ashore to refresh us, after the fatigue of our voyage. Seven men and I were one day on shore, and on the following evening, as we were all very merry, the room door bursts open, enters a sergeant and twelve grenadiers, with their bayonets screwed, and puts us all under the king's arrest. It seems my company were Scotchmen in the French service, and had been in Scotland to enlist soldiers for the French army. I endeavoured all I could to prove my innocence; however, I remained in prison with the rest a fortnight, and with difficulty got off even then. Dear sir, keep this all a secret, or at least say it was for debt; for if it were once known at the university, I should hardly get a degree. But hear how Providence interposed in my favour; the ship was gone on to Bordeaux before I got from prison, and was wrecked at the mouth of the Garonne, and every one of the crew were drowned. It happened the last great storm. There was a ship at that time ready for Holland; I embarked, and in nine days, thank my God, I arrived safe at Rotterdam, whence I travelled by land to Leyden, and whence I now write.»

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He proceeds in the same letter to amuse his friends with a whimsical account of the costume and manners of the Hollanders; which we also extract for the entertainment of the reader.

« You may expect some account of this country; and though I am not well qualified for such an undertaking, yet I shall endeavour to satisfy some part of your expectations. Nothing surprised me more than the books every day published descriptive of the manners of this country. Any young man who takes it into his head to publish his travels, visits the countries he intends to describe; passes through them with as much inattention as his *valet de chambre;* and consequently, not having a fund himself to fill a volume, he applies to those who wrote before him, and gives us the manners of a country, not as he must have seen them, but such as they might have been fifty years before. The modern Dutchman is quite a different creature from him of former times: he in every thing imitates a Frenchman, but in his easy disengaged air, which is the result of keeping polite company. The Dutchman is vastly ceremonious, and is perhaps exactly what a Frenchman might have been in the reign of Louis XIV. Such are the better bred. But the downright Hollander is one of the oddest figures in nature. Upon a head of lank hair he wears a half-cocked narrow hat, laced with black riband; no coat, but seven waistcoats, and nine pair of breeches; so that his hips reach almost up to his arm-pits. This well-clothed vegetable is now fit to see company, or make love. But what a pleasing creature is the object of his appetite? Why, she wears a large fur cap, with a deal of Flanders lace; and for every pair of breeches he carries, she puts on two petticoats.

« A Dutch lady burns nothing about her phlegmatic admirer but his tobacco. You must know, sir, every woman carries in her hand a stove with coals in it, which, when she sits, she snugs under her petticoats; and at this chimney dozing Strephon lights his pipe. I take it that this continual smoking is what gives the man the ruddy healthful complexion he generally wears, by draining his superfluous moisture; while the woman,

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deprived of this amusement, overflows with such viscidities as tint the complexion, and give that paleness of visage which low fenny grounds and moist air conspire to cause. A Dutch woman and a Scotch will well bear an opposition. The one is pale and fat, the other lean and ruddy. The one walks as if she were straddling after a go-cart, and the other takes too masculine a stride. I shall not endeavour to deprive either country of its share of beauty; but must say, that of all objects on this earth, an English farmer's daughter is most charming. Every woman there is a complete beauty, while the higher class of women want many of the requisites to make them even tolerable. Their pleasures here are very dull, though very various. You may smoke, you may doze, you may go to the Italian comedy, as good an amusement as either of the former. This entertainment always brings in Harlequin, who is generally a magician; and in consequence of his diabolical art, performs a thousand tricks on the rest of the persons of the drama, who are all fools. I have seen the pit in a roar of laughter at this humour, when with his sword he touches the glass from which another was drinking. 'Twas not his face they laughed at, for that was masked: they must have seen something vastly queer in the wooden sword, that neither I, nor you, sir, were you there, could see.

« In winter, when their canals are frozen, every house is forsaken, and all people are on the ice; sleds drawn by horses, and skating, are at that time the reigning amusements. They have boats here that slide on the ice, and are driven by the winds. When they spread all their sails they go more than a mile and a half a-minute, and their motion is so rapid, the eye can scarcely accompany them. Their ordinary manner of travelling is very cheap and very convenient. They sail in covered boats drawn by horses; and in these you are sure to meet people of all nations. Here the Dutch slumber, the French chatter, and the English play at cards. Any man who likes company, may have them to his taste. For my part, I generally detached myself from all society, and was wholly taken up in observing the face of the country. Nothing can equal its beauty. Where-

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ever I turn my eyes, fine houses, elegant gardens, statues, grottos, vistas, presented themselves; but when you enter their towns you are charmed beyond description. No misery is to be seen here; every one is usefully employed.

« Scotland and this country bear the highest contrast. There, hills and rocks intercept every prospect; here, 'tis all a continued plain. There you might see a well-dressed duchess issuing from a dirty close; and here a dirty Dutchman inhabiting a palace. The Scotch may be compared to a tulip planted in dung; but I never see a Dutchman in his own house, but I think of a magnificent Egyptian temple dedicated to an ox.

« Physic is by no means taught here so well as in Edinburgh; and in all Leyden there are but four British students, owing to all necessaries being so extremely dear, and the professors so very lazy (the chemical professor excepted), that we don't much care to come hither. I am not certain how long my stay here may be; however, I expect to have the happiness of seeing you at Kilmore, if I can, next March.»

While resident in Leyden, he attended the lectures of Gaubius on chemistry, and those of Albinus on anatomy. In the letters of Goldsmith to his uncle, Gaubius is the only professor of whose talents he gives a favourable opinion.[1] Of all the other professors he seems to have formed rather a contemptuous estimate; and with regard to the inhabitants in general, his remarks are by no means of a laudatory description. But to appreciate the characters of men, and describe the manners of a people with accuracy, require the nicest discrimination, and much knowledge of the world. On such subjects, therefore, the opinions of our poet, at this early period of his life, are to be the less regarded. His Dutch characteristics can only be deemed good-humoured caricatures, and probably were drawn as such, merely for the amusement of his friends in Ireland.

It happened, unfortunately for Goldsmith, that one of his most dangerous propensities met with too much encouragement dur-

[1] Gaubius died in 1780, at the age of 75, leaving a splendid reputation. He was the favourite pupil of Boerhaave, and wrote several learned and ingenious works.

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ing his stay in Holland. The people of that country are much addicted to games of chance. Gaming-tables are to be met with in every tavern, and at every place of amusement. Goldsmith, unable to resist the contagion of example, with his usual facility sailed with the stream; and fortune, according to custom, alternately greeted him with smiles and frowns. His friend, Dr Ellis,[1] who was then also studying at Leyden, used to relate, that on one occasion he came to him with much exultation, and counted out a considerable sum which he had won the preceding evening. « Perceiving that this temporary success,» said Ellis, « was only fanning the flame of a ruinous passion, I was at some pains to point out to him the destructive consequences of indulging so dangerous a propensity. I exhorted him, since fortune had for once been unusually kind, to rest satisfied with his present gains, and showed, that if he set apart the money now in his hands, he would be able to complete his studies without further assistance from his friends. Goldsmith, who could perceive, though he could not always pursue the right path, admitted all the truth of my observations, seemed grateful for my advice, and promised for the future strictly to adhere to it.» The votary of play, however, is never to be so easily cured. Reason and ridicule are equally impotent against that unhappy passion. To those infected with it, the charms of the gaming-table may be said to be omnipotent. Soon after this, he once more gave himself up to it without control, and not only lost all he had lately won, but was stripped of every shilling he had in the world. In this emergency he was obliged to have recourse to Dr Ellis for advice. His friend perceived that admonition was useless, and that so long as he remained within reach of the vortex of play, his gambling propensities could never be restrained. It was therefore determined that he ought to quit Holland; and with a view to his further improvement, it was suggested that he should visit some of the neighbouring countries before returning to his own. He readily acceded to this proposal, and notwithstanding the paucity of his means, resolved to pursue

[1] Afterwards clerk of the Irish House of Commons.

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it without delay. Ellis, however, kindly took his wants into consideration, and agreed to accommodate him with a sum of money to carry his plan into execution; but in this, as in other instances, his heedless improvidence interfered to render his friend's generosity abortive. When about to set out on his journey, accident or curiosity led him into a garden at Leyden, where the choicest flowers were reared for sale. In consequence of an unaccountable mania for flowers having at one time spread itself over Holland, an extensive trade in flower-roots became universally prevalent in that country, and at this period the Dutch florists were the most celebrated in Europe.[1] Fortunes and law-suits innumerable had been lost and won in this singular traffic; and though the rage had now greatly subsided, flower-roots still bore a considerable value. Unluckily, while rambling through the garden at Leyden, Goldsmith recollected that his uncle was an amateur of such rarities. With his usual inconsiderateness he immediately concluded a bargain for a parcel of the roots, never reflecting on his own limited means, or the purpose for which his money had been furnished. This absurd and extravagant purchase nearly exhausted the fund he had already received from his friend Ellis, and it is not unlikely that the gaming-table gleaned the little that remained; for it has been often asserted, that after his magnificent speculation in tulip-roots he actually set out upon his travels with only one clean shirt, and without a shilling in his pocket.

When this expedition was projected, it is most likely that nothing more was intended than a short excursion into Belgium and France. The passion for travel, however, which had so long lain dormant in his mind was now thoroughly awakened. Blessed with a good constitution, an adventurous spirit, and with that thoughtless, or perhaps happy disposition, which

[1] It was the celebrated tulip mania. For a tulip-root, known by the name of Semper Augustus, 55*o*l. sterling was given; and for other tulip-roots less rare, various prices were given, from one hundred to four hundred guineas. This madness raged in Holland for many years, till at length the State interfered, and a law was enacted which put a stop to the trade.

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takes no care for to-morrow, he continued his travels for a long time in spite of innumerable privations; and neither poverty, fatigue, nor hardship, seems to have damped his ardour, or interrupted his progress. It is a well-authenticated fact, that he performed the tour of Europe on foot, and that he finished the arduous and singular undertaking without any other means than was obtained by an occasional display of his scholarship, or a tune upon his flute.

It is much to be regretted that no account of his tour was ever given to the world by himself. The oral communications which he sometimes gave to friends, are said to have borne some resemblance to the story of the Wanderer in his Vicar of Wakefield. The interest they excited did not arise so much from the novelty of the incidents as from the fine vein of moral reflection interwoven with the narrative. Like the Wanderer, he possessed a sufficient portion of ancient literature, some taste in music, and a tolerable knowledge of the French language. His learning was a passport to the hospitalities of the literary and religious establishments on the continent, and the music of his flute generally procured him a welcome reception at the cottages of the peasantry. « Whenever I approached a peasant's house towards night-fall,» he used to say, « I played one of my merriest tunes, and that procured me not only a lodging, but subsistence for the next day; but, in truth,» his constant expression, « I must own, whenever I attempted to entertain persons of a higher rank, they always thought my performance odious, and never made me any return for my endeavours to please them.» The hearty good-will, however, with which he was received by the harmless peasantry, seems to have atoned to him for the disregard of the rich. How much their simple manners won upon his affections, may be discovered from the fine passage in his « Traveller,» in which he so happily introduces himself:—

> How often have I led thy sportive choir
> With tuneless pipe beside the murmuring Loire!

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Where shading elms along the margin grew,
And freshen'd from the wave the zephyr flew:
And haply, though my harsh touch, falt'ring still,
But mock'd all tune, and marr'd the dancer's skill,
Yet would the village praise my wondrous power,
And dance, forgetful of the noontide hour.

The learned and religious houses also appear to have been equally hospitable. « With the members of these establishments,» said he, « I could converse on topics of literature, and then I always forgot the meanness of my circumstances.»

In many of the foreign universities and convents there are, upon certain days, philosophical theses maintained against every adventitious disputant; for which, if the champion opposes with any dexterity, he can claim a gratuity in money, a dinner, and a bed for one night. The talents of Goldsmith frequently enabled him to command the relief afforded by this useful and hospitable custom. In this manner, without money or friends, he fought his way from convent to convent, and from city to city, examined mankind more nearly, and, as he himself expressed it, saw both sides of the picture.

To Goldsmith's close and familiar intercourse with the scenes and natives of the different countries through which he passed, the world is indebted for his «Traveller.» For although that poem was afterwards « slowly and painfully elaborated,» still the nice and accurate discrimination of national character displayed could only be acquired by actual examination. In the progress of his journey, he seems to have treasured his facts and observations, with a view to the formation of this delightful poem. The first sketch of it is said to have been written after his arrival in Switzerland, and was transmitted from that country to his brother Henry in Ireland.

After his arrival in Switzerland, he took up his abode for some time in Geneva. Here he appears to have found friends, or formed acquaintances; for we find him recommended at this place as tutor to a young gentleman on his travels. The youth to whom he was recommended was the nephew of Mr S******, pawnbroker in London, who had unexpectedly acquired

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a large fortune by the death of his uncle. Determined to see the world, he had just arrived at Geneva on the grand tour, and not being provided with a travelling tutor, Goldsmith was hired to perform the functions of that office. They set out together for Marseilles; but never were tutor and pupil so miserably assorted. The latter, before acquiring his fortune, had been for some time articled to an attorney, and while in that capacity had so well learned the art of managing in money concerns, that it had at length become his favourite study. Naturally avaricious, his training as an attorney had nothing diminished the reign of that sordid passion, and it discovered its most odious features in almost every transaction. When he engaged a tutor, therefore, he took care to make a special proviso, that in all money matters he should be at liberty to tutor himself. A stipulation of this kind so cramped the views and propensities of Goldsmith, and afforded to the pupil so many opportunities of displaying his mean disposition, that disgust and dislike almost immediately ensued. When arrived at Marseilles they mutually agreed to separate; and the poet having received the small part of his salary that was due, his pupil, terrified at the expense of travelling, instantly embarked for England.

Goldsmith, thus freed from the trammels of tutorship, set out once more on foot, and in that manner travelled through various districts of France. He finally pursued his journey into Italy, visiting Venice, Verona, Florence, and other celebrated places. At Padua, where he staid six months, he is said to have taken a medical degree, but upon what authority is not ascertained. While resident at Padua he was assisted, it is believed, by remittances from his uncle Contarine, who, however, unfortunately died about that time.[1] In Italy, Goldsmith found

[1] The Rev. Thomas Contarine was descended from the noble family of the Contarini of Venice. His ancestor, having married a nun in his native country, was obliged to fly with her into France, where she died of the small-pox. Being pursued by ecclesiastical censures, Contarini came to England; but the puritanical manners which then prevailed, having afforded him but a cold reception, he was on his way to Ireland, when at Chester he met with a young lady of the name of

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his talent for music almost useless as a means of subsistence, for every peasant was a better musician than himself; but his skill in disputation still served his purpose, and the religious establishments were equally hospitable. At length, curiosity being fully gratified, he resolved to retrace his steps towards his native home. He returned through France, as the shorter route, and as affording greater facilities to a pedestrian. He was lodged and entertained as formerly, sometimes at religious and learned establishments, and sometimes at the cottages of the peasantry, and thus, with the aid of his philosophy and his flute, he disputed and piped his way homewards.

When Goldsmith arrived at Dover from France, it was about the breaking out of the war in 1755-6. Being unprovided with money, a new difficulty now presented itself, how to fight his way to the metropolis. His whole stock of cash could not defray the expense of the ordinary conveyance, and neither flute nor logic could help him to a supper or a bed. By some means or other, however, he contrived to reach London in safety. On his arrival he had only a few halfpence in his pocket. To use his own words, in one of his letters, he found himself «without friend, recommendation, money, or impudence;» and, contrary to his usual habits, began to be filled with the gloomiest apprehensions. There was not a moment to be lost, therefore, in seeking for a situation that might afford him the means of immediate subsistence. His first attempt was to get admission as assistant to a boarding-school or academy, but, for want of a recommendation, even that poor and painful situation was found difficult to be obtained. This difficulty appears also to have been nothing lessened by his stooping to make use of a feigned name. What his motives were for such a measure has never been fully explained; but it is fair to infer, that his literary pride revolted at servitude, and perhaps, conscious that his powers would ultimately enable him to emerge

Chaloner whom he married. Having afterwards conformed to the established church, he, through the interest of his wife's family, obtained ecclesiastical preferment in the diocese of Elphin. This gentleman was their lineal descendant.—*Campbell's Biography of Goldsmith.*

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from his present obscurity, he was unwilling it should afterwards be known that he had occupied a situation so humble. Deceit and finesse, however, are at all times dangerous, be the motive for employing them ever so innocent; and in the present instance our author found them productive of considerable embarrassment; for, when the master of the school demanded a reference to some respectable person for a character, Goldsmith was at a loss to account for using any other name than his own. In this dilemma he wrote to Dr Radcliff, a mild benevolent man, who had been joint-tutor with his persecutor Wilder, in Trinity College, and had sometimes lectured the other pupils. Having candidly stated to the doctor the predicament in which he was placed, and explained the immediate object in view, he told him that the same post which conveyed this information would also bring him a letter of inquiry from the schoolmaster, to which it was hoped he would be so good as return a favourable answer. It appears that Dr Radcliff promptly complied with this request, for Goldsmith immediately obtained the situation. We learn from Campbell's Philosophical Survey of the South of Ireland, that our author's letter of thanks to Dr Radcliff on that occasion was accompanied with a very interesting account of his travels and adventures.

The employment of usher at an academy in London, is of itself a task of no ordinary labour; but, independent of the drudgery and toil, it is attended with so many little irritating circumstances, that of all others it is perhaps a situation the most painful and irksome to a man of independent mind and liberal ideas. To a person of our author's temper and habits, it was peculiarly distasteful. How long he remained in this situation is not well ascertained, but he ever spoke of it in bitterness of spirit. The very remembrance of it seemed to be gall and wormwood to him; and how keenly he must have felt its mortification and misery, may be gathered from the satire with which it is designated in various parts of his works. The language which he has put into the mouth of the Wanderer's cousin, when he applies to him for an ushership, is feelingly characteristic. « I,» said he, « have been an usher to a boarding-

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school myself; and may I die by an anodyne necklace, but I had rather be an under-turnkey in Newgate! I was up early and late: I was browbeat by the master, hated for my ugly face by the mistress, worried by the boys within, and never permitted to stir out to meet civility abroad. But, are you sure you are fit for a school? Let me examine you a little. Have you been bred apprentice to the business?»—No.—« Then you won't do for a school. Can you dress the boys' hair?»—No.—« Then you won't do for a school. Have you had the small-pox?»—No.—« Then you won't do for a school. Can you lie three in a bed?»—No.—« Then you will never do for a school. Have you got a good stomach?»—Yes.—« Then you will by no means do for a school. No, sir: if you are for a genteel, easy profession, bind yourself seven years as an apprentice to turn a cutler's wheel; but avoid a school by any means.»

On another occasion, when talking on the same subject, our author thus summed up the misery of such an employment:—« After the fatigues of the day, the poor usher of an academy is obliged to sleep in the same bed with a Frenchman, a teacher of that language to the boys, who disturbs him every night, an hour perhaps, in papering and filleting his hair, and stinks worse than a carrion, with his rancid pomatums, when he lays his head beside him on his bolster.»

Having thrown up this wretched employment, he was obliged to cast about for one more congenial to his mind. In this, however, he again found considerable difficulty. His personal appearance and address were never prepossessing, but at that particular period were still less so from the thread-bare state of his wardrobe. He applied to several of the medical tribe, but had the mortification to meet with repeated refusals; and on more than one occasion was jeered with the mimicry of his broad Irish accent. At length a chemist, near Fish-street-hill, took him into his laboratory, where his medical knowledge soon rendered him an able and useful assistant. Not long after this, however, accident discovered to him that his old friend and fellow-student, Dr Sleigh, was in London, and he determined, if possible, to renew his acquaintance with him. « It was Sunday,»

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said Goldsmith, « when I paid him the first visit, and it is to be supposed I was dressed in my best clothes. Sleigh scarcely knew me; such is the tax the unfortunate pay to poverty. However, when he did recollect me, I found his heart as warm as ever, and he shared his purse and his friendship with me during his continuance in London.»

The friendship of Dr Sleigh[1] was not confined to the mere relief of our poet's immediate wants, but showed itself in an anxious solicitude for his permanent success in life. Nobody better knew how to appreciate his talents and acquirements, and the accurate knowledge that Sleigh possessed of London qualified him to advise and direct the poet in his subsequent pursuits. Accordingly we find that Goldsmith, encouraged by his friend's advice, commenced medical practitioner at Bankside, in Southwark, whence he afterwards removed to the Temple and its neighbourhood. In Southwark it appears that his practice did not answer his expectations, but in the vicinity of the Temple he was more successful. The fees of the physician, however, were little, and that little, as is usual among the poorer classes, was very ill paid. He found it necessary, therefore, to have recourse likewise to his pen, and being introduced by Dr Sleigh to some of the booksellers, was almost immediately engaged in their service;—and thus, « with very little practice as a physician, and very little reputation as a poet,» as he himself expresses it, he made « a shift to live.» The peculiarities of his situation at this period are described in the following letter, addressed to the gentleman who had married his eldest sister. It is dated Temple Exchange Coffee-house, December 27, 1757, and addressed to Daniel Hodson, Esq., at Lishoy, near Ballymahon, Ireland.

« Dear Sir,—It may be four years since my last letters went to Ireland; and from you in particular I received no answer, probably because you never wrote to me. My brother Charles, however, informs me of the fatigue you were at in soliciting a

[1] This gentleman subsequently settled in Cork, his native city, and was rapidly rising into eminence in his profession, when he was cut off in the flower of his age by an inflammatory fever, which deprived the world of a fine scholar, a skilful physician, and an honest man.

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subscription to assist me, not only among my friends and relations, but acquaintance in general. Though my pride might feel some repugnance at being thus relieved, yet my gratitude can suffer no diminution. How much am I obliged to you, to them, for such generosity, or (why should not your virtues have the proper name) for such charity to me at that juncture. Sure I am born to ill-fortune, to be so much a debtor, and unable to repay. But to say no more of this: too many professions of gratitude are often considered as indirect petitions for future favours; let me only add, that my not receiving that supply was the cause of my present establishment at London. You may easily imagine what difficulties I had to encounter, left as I was without friends, recommendations, money, or impudence; and that in a country where being born an Irishman was sufficient to keep me unemployed. Many in such circumstances would have had recourse to the friar's cord, or the suicide's halter. But, with all my follies, I had principle to resist the one, and resolution to combat the other.

« I suppose you desire to know my present situation. As there is nothing in it at which I should blush, or which mankind could censure, I see no reason for making it a secret. In short, by a very little practice as a physician, and a very little reputation as a poet, I make a shift to live. Nothing is more apt to introduce us to the gates of the Muses than poverty; but it were well for us if they only left us at the door—the mischief is, they sometimes choose to give us their company at the entertainment, and want, instead of being gentleman-usher, often turns master of the ceremonies. Thus, upon hearing I write, no doubt you imagine I starve; and the name of an author naturally reminds you of a garret. In this particular I do not think proper to undeceive my friends. But whether I eat or starve; live in a first floor, or four pair of stairs high, I still remember them with ardour; nay, my very country comes in for a share of my affection. Unaccountable fondness for country, this *maladie du pays,* as the French call it! Unaccountable, that he should still have an affection for a place, who never received, when in it, above common civility; who never brought any thing out of it, except

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his brogue and his blunders. Surely my affection is equally ridiculous with the Scotchman's, who refused to be cured of the itch because it made him *unco thoughtful o' his wife and bonnie Inverary*. But now to be serious; let me ask myself what gives me a wish to see Ireland again? The country is a fine one, perhaps? No.—There are good company in Ireland? No.—The conversation there is generally made up of a smutty toast, or a bawdy song. The vivacity supported by some humble cousin, who has just folly enough to earn his dinner.—Then, perhaps, there is more wit and learning among the Irish? Oh, Lord, no! There has been more money spent in the encouragement of the Podareen mare there in one season, than given in rewards to learned men since the time of Usher. All their productions in learning amount to perhaps a translation, or a few tracts in divinity; and all their productions in wit to just nothing at all.—Why the plague, then, so fond of Ireland? Then, all at once, because you, my dear friend, and a few more, who are exceptions to the general picture, have a residence there. This it is that gives me all the pangs I feel in separation. I confess I carry this spirit sometimes to the souring the pleasures I at present possess. If I go to the opera, where Signora Columba pours out all the mazes of melody, I sit and sigh for Lishoy fireside, and Johnny Armstrong's Last Good Night, from Peggy Golden. If I climb Flamstead-hill, than where nature never exhibited a more magnificent prospect, I confess it fine, but then I had rather be placed on the little mount before Lishoy gate, and there take in, to me, the most pleasing horizon in nature. Before Charles came hither, my thoughts sometimes found refuge from severe studies among my friends in Ireland. I fancied strange revolutions at home; but I find it was the rapidity of my own motion that gave an imaginary one to objects really at rest. No alterations there. Some friends, he tells me, are still lean, but very rich; others very fat, but still very poor. Nay, all the news I hear of you is, that you and Mrs Hodson sometimes sally out in visits among the neighbours, and sometimes make a migration from the blue bed to the brown. I could from my heart wish that you and she, and Lishoy and Ballymahon, and all of you, would

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fairly make a migration into Middlesex; though, upon second thoughts, this might be attended with a few inconveniencies: therefore, as the mountain will not come to Mahomet, why Mahomet shall go to the mountain; or, to speak plain English, as you cannot conveniently pay me a visit, if next summer I can contrive to be absent six weeks from London, I shall spend three of them among my friends in Ireland. But first believe me, my design is purely to visit, and neither to cut a figure nor levy contributions, neither to excite envy nor solicit favour; in fact, my circumstances are adapted to neither. I am too poor to be gazed at, and too rich to need assistance.

« You see, dear Dan, how long I have been talking about myself; but attribute my vanity to my affection: as every man is fond of himself, and I consider you as a second self, I imagine you will consequently be pleased with these instances of egotism.»

Goldsmith then alludes to some concerns of a private nature, and concludes:

« My dear sir, these things give me real uneasiness, and I could wish to redress them. But at present there is hardly a kingdom in Europe in which I am not a debtor. I have already discharged my most threatening and pressing demands, for we must be just before we can be grateful. For the rest I need not say, (you know I am), your affectionate kinsman.»

The medical and literary pursuits of our author, though productive, at this period, of little emolument, gradually extended the sphere of his acquaintance. Several of his fellow-students at Edinburgh and Dublin were now resident in London, and, by degrees, he continued to renew the intimacy that had formerly subsisted between them. Some of them occasionally assisted him with their purse, and others procured him the notice of the polite and the learned. Among the friendships thus agreeably renewed, there was one with a medical character,[1] afterwards eminent in his profession, who used to give the following account of our author's first interview with him in London.

[1] It is presumed that Dr Sleigh is meant.

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« From the time of Goldsmith's leaving Edinburgh in the year 1754, I never saw him till the year 1756, when I was in London attending the hospitals and lectures: early in January he called upon me one morning before I was up, and on my entering the room I recognized my old acquaintance, dressed in a rusty full-trimmed black suit, with his pockets full of papers, which instantly reminded me of the poet in Garrick's farce of Lethe. After we had finished our breakfast he drew from his pocket part of a tragedy, which he said he had brought for my correction. In vain I pleaded inability, when he began to read, and every part on which I expressed a doubt as to the propriety, was immediately blotted out. I then more earnestly pressed him not to trust to my judgment, but to take the opinion of persons better qualified to decide on dramatic compositions. He now told me that he had submitted his production, so far as he had written, to Mr Richardson, the author of Clarissa, on which I peremptorily declined offering another criticism on the performance. The name and subject of the tragedy have unfortunately escaped my memory, neither do I recollect, with exactness, how much he had written, though I am inclined to believe that he had not completed the third act; I never heard whether he afterwards finished it. In this visit, I remember his relating a strange Quixotic scheme he had in contemplation, of going to decipher the inscriptions on the *Written Mountains,* though he was altogether ignorant of Arabic, or the language in which they might be supposed to be written. The salary of three hundred pounds per annum, which had been left for the purpose, was the temptation !»

With regard to the sketch of a tragedy here alluded to, the piece never was completed, nor did he afterwards attempt any thing in the same line. His project respecting the *Written Mountains,* was certainly an undertaking of a most extravagant description; but, if we consider how little qualified he was for such a task, it can hardly be supposed that the scheme ever entered seriously into his mind. It was not unusual with him to hazard opinions and adopt resolutions, without much consideration, and often without calculating the means to the end.

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« Goldsmith,» said Boswell, « had a more than common share of that hurry of ideas which we often find in his countrymen. He was very much what the French call *un étourdi*, and from vanity and an eager desire of being conspicuous, wherever he was, he frequently talked carelessly, without knowledge of the subject, or even without thought.» The extravagant scheme respecting the *Written Mountains*, however, seems soon to have given way to a more rational undertaking at home; and, notwithstanding our author's boast, in his letter to Mr Hodson, of being « too rich to need assistance,» we find him, about this time, induced to relinquish his medical practice, and undertake the management of the classical school at Peckham. The master, Dr Milner, having been seized with a severe illness, was unable to attend to the duties of his charge; and it had been necessary to procure a person, of classical attainments, to preside over the establishment, while deprived of his own support. The son of the doctor having studied with Goldsmith at Edinburgh, knew his abilities as a scholar, and recommended him to his father as a person well qualified for the situation. Our author accordingly took charge of the school, and acquitted himself in the management so much to the satisfaction of his employer, that he engaged to procure a medical appointment for him under the East India Company. Dr Milner had considerable influence with some of the directors, and afterwards made good his promise, for, by his means, through the interest of the director Mr Jones, Goldsmith was appointed physician to one of the factories in India, in the year 1758.

This appointment seems, for a while, to have filled the vivid imagination of our author with splendid dreams of futurity. The princely fortunes acquired by some individuals in the Indies flattered him with the hope of similar success; and accordingly we find him bending his whole soul to the accomplishment of this new undertaking. The chief obstacle that stood in the way was the expense of his equipment for so long a voyage; but his « Present State of Polite Literature in Europe » had been, for some time, preparing for the press; and he seems to have relied that the profits of that work would afford the means of enabling

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him to embark. Proposals were immediately drawn up, and published, to print the work by subscription. These he circulated with indefatigable zeal and industry. He wrote to his friends in Ireland to promote the subscription in that country, and, in the correspondence with them, he evinces the greatest anxiety for its success. In the following letter he explains his situation and prospects, and shows how much he had set his heart on the expedition to the East. It is without date, but written some time in 1758, or in the early part of 1759, and addressed to Mr Daniel Hodson, his brother-in-law.

« Dear Sir,—You cannot expect regularity in one who is regular in nothing. Nay, were I forced to love you by rule, I dare venture to say, I could never do it sincerely. Take me then with all my faults. Let me write when I please; for you see I say what I please, and am only thinking aloud when writing to you. I suppose you have heard of my intention of going to the East Indies. The place of my destination is one of the factories on the coast of Coromandel, and I go in the quality of physician and surgeon; for which the Company has signed my warrant, which has already cost me ten pounds. I must also pay fifty pounds for my passage, and ten pounds for my sea-stores; and the other incidental expenses of my equipment will amount to sixty or seventy pounds more. The salary is but trifling, viz. one hundred pounds per annum; but the other advantages, if a person be prudent, are considerable. The practice of the place, if I am rightly informed, generally amounts to not less than one thousand pounds per annum, for which the appointed physician has an exclusive privilege. This, with the advantages resulting from trade, with the high interest which money bears, viz. twenty per cent., are the inducements which persuade me to undergo the fatigues of the sea, the dangers of war, and the still greater dangers of the climate; which induce me to leave a place where I am every day gaining friends and esteem, and where I might enjoy all the conveniencies of life. I am certainly wrong not to be contented with what I already possess, trifling as it is; for should I ask myself one serious question, What is it I want? —what can I answer? My desires are as capricious as the big-

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bellied woman's who longed for a piece of her husband's nose. I have no certainty, it is true; but why cannot I do as some men of more merit, who have lived on more precarious terms? Scarron used jestingly to call himself the Marquis of Quenault, which was the name of the bookseller that employed him: and why may not I assert my privilege and quality on the same pretensions? Yet, upon deliberation, whatever airs I give myself on this side of the water, my dignity, I fancy, would be evaporated before I reached the other. I know you have in Ireland a very indifferent idea of a man who writes for bread, though Swift and Steele did so in the earliest part of their lives. You imagine, I suppose, that every author by profession lives in a garret, wears shabby clothes, and converses with the meanest company. Yet I do not believe there is one single writer, who has abilities to translate a French novel, that does not keep better company, wear finer clothes, and live more genteelly, than many who pride themselves for nothing else in Ireland. I confess it again, my dear Dan, that nothing but the wildest ambition could prevail on me to leave the enjoyment of that refined conversation which I am sometimes permitted to partake in, for uncertain fortune, and paltry show. You cannot conceive how I am sometimes divided. To leave all that is dear to me gives me pain; but when I consider I may possibly acquire a genteel independence for life; when I think of that dignity which philosophy claims, to raise itself above contempt and ridicule; when I think thus, I eagerly long to embrace every opportunity of separating myself from the vulgar, as much in my circumstances as I am already in my sentiments. I am going to publish a book, for an account of which I refer you to a letter which I wrote to my brother Goldsmith. Circulate for me among your acquaintance a hundred proposals, which I have given orders may be sent to you; and if, in pursuance of such circulation, you should receive any subscriptions, let them, when collected, be transmitted to Mr Bradley, who will give a receipt for the same.

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« I know not how my desire of seeing Ireland, which had so long slept, has again revived with so much ardour. So weak is my temper, and so unsteady, that I am frequently tempted, particularly when low-spirited, to return home, and leave my fortune, though just beginning to look kinder. But it shall not be. In five or six years I hope to indulge these transports. I find I want constitution, and a strong steady disposition, which alone makes men great. I will, however, correct my faults, since I am conscious of them.»

The following letter to Edward Mills, Esq. dated Temple Exchange Coffee-house, August 7, 1759, gives the title of the book he was about to publish, as stated in the foregoing letter.

« Dear Sir,—You have quitted, I find, that plan of life which you once intended to pursue, and given up ambition for domestic tranquillity. Were I to consult your satisfaction alone in this change, I have the utmost reason to congratulate your choice; but when I consider my own, I cannot avoid feeling some regret, that one of my few friends has declined a pursuit in which he had every reason to expect success. The truth is, like the rest of the world, I am self-interested in my concern; and do not so much consider the happiness you have acquired, as the honour I have probably lost in the change. I have often let my fancy loose when you were the subject, and have imagined you gracing the bench, or thundering at the bar; while I have taken no small pride to myself, and whispered all that I could come near, that this was my cousin. Instead of this, it seems you are contented to be merely a happy man; to be esteemed only by your acquaintance; to cultivate your paternal acres; to take unmolested a nap under one of your own hawthorns, or in Mrs Mills's bed-chamber, which, even a poet must confess, is rather the most comfortable place of the two.

« But, however your resolutions may be altered with respect to your situation in life, I persuade myself they are unalterable with regard to your friends in it. I cannot think the world has taken such entire possession of that heart (once so susceptible of friendship), as not to have left a corner there for a friend or two; but I flatter myself that I even have my place among the

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number. This I have a claim to from the similitude of our dispositions; or, setting that aside, I can demand it as my right by the most equitable law in nature, I mean that of retaliation; for indeed you have more than your share in mine. I am a man of few professions; and yet this very instant I cannot avoid the painful apprehension, that my present profession (which speaks not half my feelings,) should be considered only as a pretext to cover a request, as I have a request to make. No, my dear Ned, I know you are too generous to think so; and you know me too proud to stoop to mercenary insincerity. I have a request, it is true, to make; but, as I know to whom I am a petitioner, I make it without diffidence or confusion. It is in short this: I am going to publish a book in London, entitled, « An Essay on the present State of Taste and Literature in Europe.» Every work published here, the printers in Ireland republish there, without giving the author the least consideration for his copy. I would in this respect disappoint their avarice, and have all the additional advantages that may result from the sale of my performance there to myself. The book is now printing in London, and I have requested Dr Radcliff, Mr Lawder, Mr Bryanton, my brother Mr Henry Goldsmith, and brother-in-law Mr Hodson, to circulate my proposals among their acquaintance. The same request I now make to you; and have accordingly given directions to Mr Bradley, bookseller in Dame-street, Dublin, to send you a hundred proposals. Whatever subscriptions, pursuant to those proposals, you may receive, when collected, may be transmitted to Mr Bradley, who will give a receipt for the money and be accountable for the books. I shall not, by a paltry apology, excuse myself for putting you to this trouble. Were I not convinced that you found more pleasure in doing good-natured things than uneasiness at being employed in them, I should not have singled you out on this occasion. It is probable you would comply with such a request, if it tended to the encouragement of any man of learning whatsoever; what then may not he expect who has claims of family and friendship to enforce his?»

The same subjects are pursued in another and very interesting

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letter, written in 1759, but subsequent to the foregoing, to his brother, the Rev. Henry Goldsmith.

« Dear Sir, — Your punctuality in answering a man whose trade is writing, is more than I had reason to expect, and yet you see me generally fill a whole sheet, which is all the recompense I can make for being so frequently troublesome. The behaviour of Mr Mills and Mr Lawder is a little extraordinary. However, their answering neither you nor me, is a sufficient indication of their disliking the employment which I assigned them. As their conduct is different from what I had expected, so I have made an alteration in mine. I shall the beginning of next month send over two hundred and fifty books,[1] which are all that I fancy can be well sold among you, and I would have you make some distinction in the persons who have *subscribed.* The money, which will amount to sixty pounds, may be left with Mr Bradley as soon as possible. I am not certain but I shall quickly have occasion for it. I have met with no disappointment with respect to my East India voyage, nor are my resolutions altered; though at the same time, I must confess it gives me some pain to think I am almost beginning the world at the age of thirty-one. Though I never had a day's sickness since I saw you, yet I am not that strong active man you once knew me. You scarcely can conceive how much eight years of disappointment, anguish, and study, have worn me down. If I remember right, you are seven or eight years older than me, yet I dare venture to say, if a stranger saw us both, he would pay me the honours of seniority. Imagine to yourself a pale, melancholy visage, with two great wrinkles between the eye-brows, with an eye disgustingly severe, and a big wig, and you may have a perfect picture of my present appearance. On the other hand, I conceive you as perfectly sleek and healthy, passing many a happy day among your own children, or those who knew you a child. Since I knew what it was to be a man, this is a pleasure I have not known. I have passed my days among a parcel of cool designing beings, and have contracted all their suspicious man-

[1] The « Present State of Polite Literature in Europe, » Subscription price, 5*s*.

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ner in my own behaviour. I should actually be as unfit for the society of my friends at home, as I detest that which I am obliged to partake of here. I can now neither partake of the pleasure of a revel, nor contribute to raise its jollity. I can neither laugh nor drink, have contracted a hesitating disagreeable manner of speaking, and a visage that looks ill-nature itself; in short, I have thought myself into a settled melancholy, and an utter disgust of all that life brings with it. Whence this romantic turn, that all our family are possessed with? Whence this love for every place and every country but that in which we reside? for every occupation but our own? This desire of fortune, and yet this eagerness to dissipate? I perceive, my dear sir, that I am at intervals for indulging this splenetic manner, and following my own taste, regardless of yours.

« The reasons you have given me for breeding up your son a scholar, are judicious and convincing. I should, however, be glad to know for what particular profession he is designed. If he be assiduous, and divested of strong passions, (for passions in youth always lead to pleasure), he may do very well in your college; for it must be owned, that the industrious poor have good encouragement there, perhaps better than in any other in Europe. But if he has ambition, strong passions, and an exquisite sensibility of contempt, do not send him there, unless you have no other trade for him except your own. It is impossible to conceive how much may be done by a proper education at home. A boy, for instance, who understands perfectly well Latin, French, arithmetic, and the principles of the civil law, and can write a fine hand, has an education that may qualify him for any undertaking. And these parts of learning should be carefully inculcated, let him be designed for whatever calling he will. Above all things, let him never touch a romance or novel; these paint beauty in colours more charming than nature, and describe happiness that man never tastes. How delusive, how destructive are those pictures of consummate bliss! They teach the youthful mind to sigh after beauty and happiness which never existed; to despise the little good which fortune has mixed in our cup, by expecting more than she ever gave: and in

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general, take the word of a man who has seen the world, and has studied human nature more by experience than precept; take my word for it, I say, that books teach us very little of the world. The greatest merit in a state of poverty would only serve to make the possessor ridiculous; may distress, but cannot relieve him. Frugality, and even avarice, in the lower orders of mankind, are true ambition. These afford the only ladder for the poor to rise to preferment. Teach, then, my dear sir, to your son thrift and economy. Let his poor wandering uncle's example be placed before his eyes. I had learned from books to be disinterested and generous, before I was taught from experience the necessity of being prudent. I had contracted the habits and notions of a philosopher, while I was exposing myself to the insidious approaches of cunning; and often by being, even with my narrow finances, charitable to excess, I forgot the rules of justice, and placed myself in the very situation of the wretch who did not thank me for my bounty. When I am in the remotest part of the world, tell him this, and perhaps he may improve from my example. But I find myself again falling into my gloomy habits of thinking.

« My mother, I am informed, is almost blind: even though I had the utmost inclination to return home, under such circumstances I could not; for to behold her in distress, without a capacity of relieving her from it, would add too much to my splenetic habit. Your last letter was much too short; it should have answered some queries I made in my former. Just sit down as I do, and write forward till you have filled all your paper; it requires no thought, at least from the ease with which my own sentiments rise when they are addressed to you: for, believe me, my head has no share in all I write; my heart dictates the whole. Pray give my love to Bob Bryanton, and entreat him, from me, not to drink. My dear sir, give me some account about poor Jenny. [1] Yet her husband loves her; if so, she cannot be unhappy.

« I know not whether I should tell you—yet why should I

[1] His youngest sister, who had married unfortunately.

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conceal these trifles, or indeed any thing, from you? There is a book of mine will be published in a few days, the life of a very extraordinary man—no less than the great Voltaire. You know already by the title, that it is no more than a catchpenny. However, I spent but four weeks on the whole performance, for which I received twenty pounds. When published, I shall take some method of conveying it to you, unless you may think it dear of the postage, which may amount to four or five shillings. However, I fear you will not find an equivalence of amusement. Your last letter, I repeat it, was too short; you should have given me your opinion of the design of the heroic-comical poem which I sent you: you remember I intended to introduce the hero of the poem as lying in a paltry alehouse. You may take the following specimen of the manner, which I flatter myself is quite original. The room in which he lies, may be described somewhat this way:—

« The window, patch'd with paper, lent a ray,
That feebly show'd the state in which he lay.
The sanded floor that grits beneath the tread;
The humid wall with paltry pictures spread;
The game of goose was there exposed to view,
And the twelve rules the royal martyr drew;
The seasons, framed with listing, found a place,
And Prussia's monarch show'd his lamp-black face.
The morn was cold; he views with keen desire
A rusty grate unconscious of a fire;
An unpaid reckoning on the frieze was scored,
And five crack'd tea-cups dress'd the chimney-board.

« And now imagine, after his soliloquy, the landlord to make his appearance, in order to dun him for the reckoning:—

« Not with that face, so servile and so gay,
That welcomes every stranger that can pay;
With sulky eye he smoked the patient man,
Then pull'd his breeches tight, and thus began, etc.

« All this is taken, you see, from nature. It is a good remark

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of Montaigne's, that the wisest men often have friends, with whom they do not care how much they play the fool. Take my present follies as instances of regard. Poetry is a much easier, and more agreeable species of composition than prose; and could a man live by it, it were no unpleasant employment to be a poet. I am resolved to leave no space, though I should fill it up only by telling you, what you very well know already, I mean that I am your most affectionate friend and brother."

Notwithstanding the ardour with which our author at first prosecuted his intention of embarking for the Indies, we find soon after that he abandoned the design altogether, and applied himself with renewed vigour to literary pursuits. From what particular motive this expedition was given up, has never been accurately explained, but most likely it was owing to the immediate impracticability of raising an adequate sum for his equipment. Perhaps, however, a better reason may be found in the rapid change that took place in our author's circumstances about this time, in consequence of the increased patronage he began to receive from the booksellers. No man had the art of displaying with more advantage as a writer, whatever literary acquisitions he had made; and whatever he put his hand to as an author, he finished with such felicity of thought, and purity of expression, that it almost instantly became popular. Hence the booksellers were soon bound to him from interest, and the profits they derived from the ready sale of his productions became the guarantee of his constant employment. He had by this time published the «Bee, being Essays on the most interesting Subjects,» also Essays and Tales in the British Magazine, afterwards collected and published in one volume, besides various criticisms in the newspapers and reviews, all of which were read with avidity by the public, and commended by the learned. His connexions with literary characters became consequently still more extended, and his literary prospects were rendered still more flattering; and hence we may the more easily account for the change that took place in his mind with regard to his Indian appointment.

Our author's toil in the service of the booksellers was now

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exceedingly laborious. Independent of his contributions to newspapers and magazines, he wrote regularly for Mr Griffiths in the Monthly Review, from nine till two o'clock every day. His friend Dr Milner had introduced him to Griffiths, and this work was performed in consequence of a written agreement, which was to last for a year. The remuneration to be given on the part of Mr Griffiths, was board and lodging, and a handsome salary; but it is probable Goldsmith found the drudgery too irksome, for at the end of seven or eight months the agreement was dissolved by mutual consent. When the "Inquiry into the State of Polite Literature» was published, Mr Newberry, the bookseller, who at that time gave great encouragement to men of literary talents, became one of our author's chief patrons. For that gentleman he was now regularly engaged in writing or compiling a variety of minor pieces, and at the same time was introduced by his means as a writer in the Public Ledger, to which he contributed *Chinese Letters*, afterwards published under the title of «The Citizen of the World.»

At this time also, Goldsmith wrote occasionally for the British Magazine and Critical Review, conducted by Dr Smollett. To that celebrated writer he was originally introduced in consequence of the taste and accuracy with which he had criticised a despicable translation of Ovid's Fasti, by a pedantic schoolmaster; though the intercourse between them does not appear to have been kept up for any considerable time, yet Goldsmith is said to have derived important advantages from the connexion. It is well known that the liberal soul of Smollett made him the friend of every author in distress; and it is generally understood that, for some time, he warmly interested himself in Goldsmith's success. He not only recommended him to the patronage of the most eminent booksellers, but introduced him to the notice of the first literary characters.

Notwithstanding the variety of our author's literary labours, however, no decided improvement in his circumstances appears to have taken place till after the publication of his «Inquiry» in 1759. At that time he had lodgings in Green-Arbour Court, Old Bailey; and, that he must have occupied them rather on

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principles of economy than from the excellence of their accommodation, is proved by a little anecdote related by one of his literary friends. « I called on Goldsmith, at his lodgings,» said he, « in March 1759, and found him writing his « Inquiry» in a miserable, dirty-looking room, in which there was but one chair; and when, from civility, he resigned it to me, he was himself obliged to sit in the window. While we were conversing together some one gently tapped at the door, and being desired to come in, a poor ragged little girl, of a very becoming demeanour, entered the room, and dropping a courtesy, said, 'my mamma sends her compliments, and begs the favour of you to lend her a chamber-pot full of coals.'»

Our author's labours for the booksellers, though for some time unproductive of general literary fame, by degrees procured him the more substantial benefits of good living and commodious lodgings. He soon acquired extraordinary facility in compilation, and used to boast of the power of his pen in this way of procuring money. Accordingly, as early as 1761, we find him removed from Green-Arbour Court to Wine-Office Court in Fleet-street, where he occupied genteel apartments, received visits of ceremony, and sometimes gave entertainments to his literary friends.

Among the distinguished characters to whom Goldsmith had been lately introduced, and with whom he now regularly associated, either from similarity of disposition or pursuits, the most remarkable in point of eminence was Dr Johnson. To a mind of the highest order, richly and variously cultivated, Johnson united a warm and generous disposition. Similar qualities, both of the head and the heart, were conspicuous in Goldsmith; and hence, to use an expression of the *Rambler* himself, no two men were, perhaps, ever better formed to *take* to one another. The innate benevolence of heart which they mutually displayed first drew them together; and so strong was the attraction, ultimately increased by respect for each other's powers, that their friendship subsisted without interruption, and with undiminished regard, for a period of fourteen years. It has been injudiciously remarked, that this connexion was unfor-

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tunate for the reputation of Goldsmith, and that, in the literary circles of the time, « he seldom appeared but as a foil to the Giant of Words.» On the contrary, however, the intercourse that subsisted between these eminent men, would rather appear to have been productive of the finest illustration of their respective characters; and such was the strength of their mutual attachment, that it seems to have been the study of each to embellish and exalt the character of the other. Besides, Johnson was the giant of intellect as well as the giant of words, and it is absurd to suppose, that, in the display of his extraordinary powers, he would ever require a foil to heighten their effect. Goldsmith, it is true, seemed sometimes, as it were, to *look up* to the great moralist, but it was rather with affection than with dread, more with the spirit of emulation than the despair of equal excellence. And, on the other hand, in no single instance do we find that Johnson ever *looked down* upon Goldsmith as inferior to himself: the reverse, indeed, is much more frequently the case; for the uniform tendency of his remarks on the genius and writings of our author, is to hold him up as the brightest literary ornament of his time. Long before his fame was established with the public, Johnson had justly appreciated his talents, and in a conversation with Boswell, concluded with asserting, that « Goldsmith was one of the first men then existing as an author.»

It has not been ascertained by whom Johnson and our author were originally introduced to one another, but it is generally understood that their intimacy commenced in the beginning of 1761. On the 31st of May, that year, we find Johnson, for the first time, at a supper in Goldsmith's lodgings, in Wine-Office Court, along with a number of literary friends. Dr Percy, afwards Bishop of Dromore, was one of the party invited, and being intimate with the great lexicographer, was requested to call at his chambers and take him along with him. When walking together to the poet's lodging, Percy was struck with the unusual spruceness of Johnson's appearance in the studied neatness of his dress: he had on a new suit of clothes, a new hat, and a wig nicely powdered; and in the *tout ensemble* of his ap-

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parel there was a degree of smartness, so perfectly dissimilar to his ordinary habits and appearance, that it could not fail to prompt an inquiry on the part of his companion, as to the cause of this transformation. « Why, sir,» said Johnson, « I hear that Goldsmith, who is a very great sloven, justifies his disregard of cleanliness and decency, quoting my practice, and I am desirous this night to show him a better example. »

The connexion betwixt our author and Johnson was henceforth more closely cemented by daily association. Mutual communication of thought begot mutual esteem, and as their intercourse increased, their friendship improved. Nothing could have been more fortunate for Goldsmith. A man of his open improvident disposition was apt to stand in need of the assistance of a friend. The years, wisdom, and experience of Johnson, rendered his advice of the highest value, and from the kindness and promptitude with which he undertook and performed good offices, he might always be securely relied on in cases of difficulty or distress. It was not long before the improvidence of our author produced embarrassment in his circumstances, and we find the illustrious moralist the prompt and affectionate Mentor of his imprudent friend. The sums which he was now receiving as a writer, might naturally be supposed to have been at least equal to his wants, and more than sufficient to have kept him out of debt. But Goldsmith's affections were so social and generous, that when he had money he gave it most liberally away. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, if we find him soon after this period in distress for money, and even under arrest for his rent. He had just put the finishing stroke to his Vicar of Wakefield when the arrest took place, and was obliged to send for his friend Johnson to raise money by a sale of the manuscript.

Our author's situation, on this occasion, having been misstated, it may be proper to give an authentic detail of it as narrated by Johnson himself.

« I received one morning a message from poor Goldsmith that he was in great distress, and as it was not in his power to come to me, begging that I would come to him as soon as pos-

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sible. I sent him a guinea, and promised to come to him directly. I accordingly went as soon as I was dressed, and found that his landlady had arrested him for his rent, at which he was in a violent passion: I perceived that he had already changed my guinea, and had a bottle of Madeira and a glass before him. I put the cork into the bottle, desired he would be calm, and began to talk to him of the means by which he might be extricated. He then told me that he had a novel ready for the press, which he produced to me. I looked into it, and saw its merit; told the landlady I should soon return; and having gone to a bookseller sold it for sixty pounds. I brought Goldsmith the money, and he discharged his rent, not without rating his landlady in a high tone for having used him so ill.»

Mr Newberry was the person with whom Johnson thus bargained for the « Vicar of Wakefield.» The price agreed on was certainly little for a work of such merit; but the author's name was not then conspicuously known to the public, and the purchaser took the whole risk on himself by paying the money down. So unconscious was he of the real worth of his purchase, and so little sanguine of its success, that he kept the manuscript by him for a long time after. Indeed, it was not till the author's fame had been fully established by the publication of his « Traveller,» that the publisher ventured to put the « Vicar of Wakefield» to the press; and then he reaped the twofold advantage arising from the intrinsic merit of the work, and the high character of its author. When Boswell, some years afterwards, remarked to Johnson, that there had been too little value given by the bookseller on this occasion: « No, sir,» said he, « the price was sufficient when the book was sold; for then the fame of Goldsmith had not been elevated, as it afterwards was, by his « Traveller;» and the bookseller had such faint hopes of profit by his bargain, that he kept the manuscript by him a long time, and did not publish till after the « Traveller» had appeared. Then, to be sure, it was accidentally worth more money. Had it been sold after the « Traveller,» twice as much money would have been given for it, though sixty guineas was no mean price. The bookseller had the advantage of Gold-

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smith's reputation from the « Traveller » in the sale, though Goldsmith had it not in selling the copy.»

After the sale of this novel, Goldsmith and Mr Newberry became still more closely connected. We find him, in 1763, in lodgings at Canonbury House, Islington, where he laboured assiduously for that gentleman, in the revisal and correction of various publications; particularly, « The Art of Poetry,» in 2 vols. 12mo; a « Life of Beau Nash,» the famous king of Bath; a republication of his own letters, originally written in the character of a Chinese Philosopher, and contributed to the Public Ledger, a newspaper of which Kelly was at that time the editor. These were now collected and given to the public in 2 vols. 12mo, under the title of « The Citizen of the World.» Of all his productions, prompted by necessity, and written on the spur of the moment, this collection of letters is entitled to the praise of supereminent merit. Few works exhibit a nicer perception, or more delicate delineation of life and manners. Wit, humour, and sentiment, pervade every page; the vices and follies of the day are touched with the most playful and diverting satire; and English characteristics, in endless variety, are hit off with the pencil of a master. They have ever maintained their currency and reputation, and are ranked among the classical productions of the British muse.

Nearly about the same time, or early in 1764, a selection of all his fugitive pieces, originally contributed to various magazines, were collected and published for his own benefit, in one volume, under the title of « Essays.» These, in their general scope and tendency bear some analogy to the letters of the Chinese Philosopher. The manner is still happier than the matter, though that too is excellent; and our author appears to have been prompted to their republication, in consequence of the liberal use that was surreptitiously made of them by the magazines and other fugitive repositories of the day. In a humorous preface which accompanied the volume, he took notice of that circumstance, and vindicates his claim to the merit as well as the profit of his own productions. « Most of these Essays,» said he, « have been regularly reprinted two or three

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times a year, and conveyed to the public through the channel of some engaging compilation. If there be a pride in multiplied editions, I have seen some of my labours sixteen times reprinted, and claimed by different parents as their own. I have seen them flourished at the beginning with praise, and signed at the end with the names of Philantos, Philalethes, Philaleutheros, and Philanthropos. These gentlemen have kindly stood sponsors to my productions; and to flatter me more, have always passed them as their own. It is time, however, at last to vindicate my claims; and as these entertainers of the public, as they call themselves, have partly lived upon me for some years, let me now try if I cannot live a little upon myself. I would desire, in this case, to imitate that fat man, whom I have somewhere heard of in a shipwreck, who, when the sailors, pressed by famine, were taking slices from his posteriors to satisfy their hunger, insisted, with great justice, on having the first cut for himself.» The rapidity with which the first impression of this little volume was disposed of, greatly surpassed the expectations of its author. Since that time, few books have gone through a greater variety of editions.

It has been somewhere remarked, that Goldsmith was a plant of slow growth; and perhaps there may be some truth in the observation, in so far as regards public applause. He had now been seven years a writer, and, notwithstanding the variety of his labours, had produced little, except his « Inquiry» and « Citizen of the World,» to distinguish him from the herd of authors by profession. With the public he was generally known as a man of letters, but as such not very remarkably distinguished; and it was frequently observed, that though his pub lications were much read, they were not greatly talked of. With the characteristic irritability of genius, conscious of its powers and jealous of its reward, Goldsmith used to fret under the pangs of neglected merit, and to repine at the slow progress of public opinion.

No votary of the muses was ever more emulous of fame; and, with his accustomed simplicity, he was careless of concealing his impatience to obtain it. Various anecdotes of his fretful

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anxiety for applause have been recorded in different publications, but the most authentic is one of rather a ludicrous description, noticed by Mr Boswell. Conversing with Dr Johnson one day on the difficulty of acquiring literary celebrity, « Ah,» said he, in a tone of distress, « the public will never do me justice; whenever I write any thing, they *make a point* to know nothing about it.» On another occasion, when Boswell was present, « I fear,» said Goldsmith, « I have come too late into the world; Pope and other poets have taken up the places in the temple of Fame, and as few at any period can possess poetical reputation, a man of genius can now hardly acquire it.» And in the same querulous tone of despondency he addresses his brother, in the dedication to his « Traveller:» « Of all kinds of ambition, as things are now circumstanced, perhaps that which pursues poetical fame is the wildest. What from the increased refinement of the times, from the diversity of judgment produced by opposing systems of criticism, and from the more prevalent divisions of opinion influenced by party, the strongest and happiest efforts can expect to please but in a very narrow circle.» A short time, however, proved to our author how fallacious were his fears. In less than a year the publication of his « Traveller » placed him at the head of the poets of his time.

The outline of this beautiful poem had been sketched during our author's residence in Switzerland, and part of it, as noticed in the dedication, had been addressed from that country to his brother Henry in Ireland. Diffident of its merit, and fearful of its success, he kept it by him in its original crude state for several years, and it was not till he had been strongly encouraged by the high opinion expressed of it by Dr Johnson, that he was at last induced to prepare it for the press. For two years previous to its publication, while toiling at other works for bread, his choicest hours are said to have been devoted to the revisal and correction of this poem, and, if report may be believed, no poem was ever touched and retouched by its author with more painful and fastidious care. When he thought at length that it had received the highest possible finishing, it was committed to the press, and came out early in 1765. It was hailed with delight by all ranks,

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celebrity and patronage followed the applause with which it was received, and Goldsmith, so far as regarded fame, was at last at the height of his ambition.

The great moral object of the « Traveller » is to reconcile man with his lot. The poet maintains that happiness is equally distributed among mankind, and that a different good, either furnished by nature or provided by art, renders the blessings of all nations even. In pursuing his subject he takes an imaginary station on the Alps, and passes his view over the countries that lie spread out beneath him, noticing those only, however, through which the author had personally travelled.

He draws a picture of each in succession, describing from his own observation their scenery and manners. He enumerates their advantages, and contrasts their various pursuits,—« wealth, commerce, honour, liberty, content,»—showing that each favourite object, when attained, runs into excess, and defeats itself by bringing with it its own peculiar evil. He proceeds to show, that contentment is more frequently to be found in a meagre mountain soil and stormy region, than in a genial climate and luxuriant country; for labour produces competence, and custom inures to hardship, while ignorance renders the rugged peasant calm and cheerful under a life of toil and deprivation. But the poet makes a distinction between mere content and happiness. If the wants of barren states are few, and their wishes limited, their enjoyments are in like manner circumscribed; for every want becomes a source of pleasure when gratified. Their virtues partake also a similar dearth, and their morals, like their pleasures, are scanty, coarse, and low.

> For, as refinement stops, from sire to son
> Unalter'd, unimproved, the manners run;
> And love's and friendship's finely pointed dart
> Fall blunted from each indurated heart.
> Some sterner virtues o'er the mountain's breast
> May sit like falcons cowering on the nest;
> But all the gentler morals, such as play
> Through life's more cultured walks, and charm the way,
> These, far dispersed, on timorous pinions fly,
> To sport and flutter in a kinder sky.

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The poet comes at length to the conclusion, that happiness centres in the mind, that it depends upon ourselves, and is equally to be enjoyed in every country and under every government; for, even in regions of tyranny and terror, where unjust laws oppress, and cruel tortures are inflicted, these evils rarely find their way into the hallowed seclusion of a domestic circle.

In this poem, we may particularly remark a quality which distinguishes the writings of Goldsmith; it perpetually presents the author to our minds. He is one of the few writers who are inseparably identified with their works. We think of him in every page; we grow intimate with him as a man, and learn to love him as we read. A general benevolence glows throughout this poem. It breathes the liberal spirit of a true citizen of the world. And yet how beautifully does it inculcate and illustrate that local attachment, that preference to native land, which, in spite of every disadvantage of soil or climate, pleads so eloquently to every bosom; which calls out with maternal voice from the sandy desert or the stormy rock, appealing irresistibly to the heart in the midst of foreign luxuries and delights, and calling the wanderer home.

When the «Traveller» was published, Dr. Johnson wrote a review of it for one of the journals, and pronounced it the finest poem that had appeared since the time of Pope. This was no cold praise, for the versification of Pope was at that time the model for imitation; his rules were the standard of criticism, and the «Essay on Man» was placed at the head of didactic poetry. The fame of Goldsmith was now firmly established; and he had the satisfaction to find, that it did not merely rest on the authority of the million, for the learned and the great now deemed themselves honoured by his acquaintance.

His poem was frequently the subject of conversation among the literary circles of the time, and particularly in that circle which used to assemble at the house of Sir Joshua Reynolds. On one occasion it was remarked among the company at Sir Joshua's, that «the 'Traveller' had brought Goldsmith into high reputation.»—«Yes,» said Mr Langton, «and no wonder; there is not one bad line in that poem, not one of Dryden's careless verses.»

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« Sir Joshua.—I was glad to hear Charles Fox say, it was one of the finest poems in the English language.

« Langton.—Why were you glad? You surely had no doubt of it before.

« Dr Johnson.—No: the merit of the « Traveller,» is so well established, that Mr Fox's praise cannot augment it, nor his censure diminish it.

« Sir Joshua.—But his friends may suspect they had too great a partiality for him.

« Johnson.—Nay, sir, it cannot be so; for the partiality of his friends was always against him.»

Goldsmith, however, was not permitted to enjoy the fame he had acquired without experiencing also the detraction that generally attends successful genius. The envy of some and the jealousy of others, especially among the minor candidates for poetical fame, was speedily awakened by the applause bestowed on his poem. Unable to deny the merit of the performance, they strove to detract from the merit of its author, by ascribing the chief part of it to the friendly muse of Dr Johnson. This question has since been finally settled. In the year 1783, Dr Johnson, at the request of Mr Boswell, marked with a pencil all the lines he had furnished, which are only line 420th,

To stop too fearful, and too faint to go;

and the concluding ten lines, except the last couplet but one, printed in italic.

How small of all that human hearts endure,
That part which laws or kings can cause or cure;
Still to ourselves in every place consign'd,
Our own felicity we make or find;
With secret course, which no loud storms annoy,
Glides the smooth current of domestic joy:
The lifted axe, the agonizing wheel,
Luke's iron crown, and Damien's bed of steel,[1]
To men remote from power but rarely known,
Leave reason, faith, and conscience, all our own.

[1] Goldsmith in this couplet mentions *Luke* as a person well known, and superficial

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Johnson added, « these are all of which I can be sure.» They bear indeed but a very trifling proportion to the whole, which consists of four hundred and thirty-eight verses. The truth in this case seems to be, that the report had its origin in the avowed fact of the poem having been submitted to Johnson's friendly revision before it was sent to the press.

Goldsmith, though now universally known and admired, and enabled to look forward to independence at home, appears still to have retained a strong tincture of his original roving disposition. He had long entertained a design of penetrating into the interior parts of Asia, to investigate the remains of ancient grandeur, learning, and manners; and when Lord Bute became prime minister at the accession of George the Third, this desire was more strongly excited by the hope of obtaining some portion of the royal bounty, then so liberally dispensed by that nobleman in pensions and benefactions to men of learning and genius. That he might be enabled to execute this favourite project, he resolved on making a direct application to the premier for pecuniary assistance, and the sanction of Government; but, the better to ensure success, he previously drew up and published in the Public Ledger, an ingenious essay on the subject, in which the advantages of such a mission were stated with much ability and eloquence. Our poor author, however, was then but little known, and not having distinguished himself by any popular literary effort, his petition or memorial was thrown aside unnoticed or neglected. Perhaps it was fortunate for literature that it so happened. Goldsmith, with all his genius and taste as a writer, was but little versed in the arts; and it is extremely questionable whether he was qualified to accomplish the

readers have passed it over quite smoothly; while those of more attention have been as much perplexed by *Luke*, as by *Lydiat* in « The Vanity of Human Wishes.» The truth is, that Goldsmith himself was in a mistake. In the « *Respublica Hungarica*,» there is an account of a desperate rebellion in the year 1514, headed by two brothers of the name of *Zeck*, George and Luke. When it was quelled, *George*, and not *Luke*, was punished, by his head being encircled with a red-hot iron crown: « *Coronâ candescente ferreâ coronatur.*» The same severity of torture was exercised on the Earl of Athol, one of the murderers of James I. of Scotland.

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task which he had proposed to himself. The opinion of his friend, Dr Johnson, who so well knew and appreciated the extent of his acquirements, may be given as decisive of such a question. In a conversation with Mr Boswell, the latter remarked, that our author «had long a visionary project of some time or other going to Aleppo, when his circumstances should be easier, in order to acquire a knowledge, as far as might be, of any arts peculiar to the East, and introduce them into Britain;» to which Johnson rejoined, «of all men, Goldsmith is most unfit to go out on such an inquiry; for he is yet ignorant of such arts as we ourselves already possess, and consequently could not know what would be accessions to our present stock of mechanical knowledge: sir, he would bring home a grinding-barrow, and think he had furnished a wonderful improvement.» Goldsmith, however, seems never to have been conscious of the deficiency of his own powers for such an undertaking. His passion for travel was never extinguished; and notwithstanding the neglect with which his application for ministerial patronage had been treated, his design of penetrating to the East frequently revived. Even after the publication of the «Traveller,» as formerly remarked, though engaged in several literary undertakings, this design was still predominant; and had it not been for his characteristic simplicity or carelessness, or perhaps his propensity to practical blundering, an opportunity was now thrown in his way that might have enabled him to fulfil his most sanguine expectations.

Among the distinguished characters of the day which the merit of the «Traveller» had attached to its author, either as patrons or friends, Lord Nugent (afterwards Earl of Clare) was conspicuous in point of rank; and his lordship, not satisfied with his own personal notice and friendship, warmly recommended him to his friends in power, particularly to the Earl (afterwards Duke) of Northumberland, then lord-lieutenant of Ireland. That nobleman, on the recommendation of Lord Nugent, had read several of Goldsmith's productions, and being charmed with the elegance of their style, expressed a desire to extend his patronage to their author. After his lordship's re-

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turn from Ireland, in 1765, he communicated his intentions to Dr Percy, who was related to the family of Northumberland, and by his means an interview took place between the poet and the peer. Of this visit to his lordship, Goldsmith used to give the following account: «I was invited by my friend Percy to wait upon the duke, in consequence of the satisfaction he had received from the perusal of one of my productions. I dressed myself in the best manner I could, and, after studying some compliments I thought necessary on such an occasion, proceeded to Northumberland-house, and acquainted the servants that I had particular business with the duke. They showed me into an ante-chamber, where, after waiting some time, a gentleman very elegantly dressed made his appearance. Taking him for the duke, I delivered all the fine things I had composed, in order to compliment him on the honour he had done me; when, to my great astonishment, he told me I had mistaken him for his master, who would see me immediately. At that instant the duke came into the apartment, and I was so confounded on the occasion, that I wanted words barely sufficient to express the sense I entertained of the duke's politeness, and went away exceedingly chagrined at the blunder I had committed.»

In the embarrassment which ensued from this awkward mistake, our author's eastern project, for which he had intended to have solicited his lordship's patronage, was totally forgotten, and the visit appears to have been concluded without even a hint as to this great object of his wishes.

Sir John Hawkins, in his «Life of Dr Johnson,» has noticed and commented on the circumstances attending this interview, with peevishness and ill-humour. «Having one day,» says he, «a call to wait on the late Duke, then Earl of Northumberland, I found Goldsmith waiting for an audience in an outer room: I asked him what had brought him there; he told me, an invitation from his lordship. I made my business as short as I could, and as a reason, mentioned that Dr Goldsmith was waiting without. The earl asked me if I was acquainted with him? I told him I was, adding what I thought was likely to recommend him. I retired, and stayed in the outer room to take him home.

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Upon his coming out, I asked him the result of this conversation. « His lordship,» said he, « told me he had read my poem, meaning the 'Traveller,' and was much delighted with it; that he was going lord-lieutenant to Ireland, and that, hearing I was a native of that country, he should be glad to do me any kindness.» « And what did you answer,» asked I, « to this gracious offer?»—« Why,» said he, « I could say nothing but that I had a brother there, a clergyman, that stood in need of help: as for myself, I have no dependence on the promises of great men; I look to the booksellers for support; they are my best friends, and I am not inclined to forsake them for others.»—« Thus,» continues Sir John, « did this idiot in the affairs of the world trifle with his fortunes, and put back the hand that was held out to assist him!»—In a worldly point of view, the conduct of Goldsmith on this occasion was undoubtedly absurd; but those who have generous dispositions will be pleased with such a characteristic instance of his well-known simplicity and goodness of heart. A benevolent mind will discover in the recommendation of a brother, to the exclusion of himself, a degree of disinterestedness, which, as it is seldom to be met with, is the more to be admired.

Though Goldsmith thus lost the only good opportunity that had offered for obtaining Government patronage for his intended eastern expedition, it must be admitted, to the honour of the Duke of Northumberland, that when the plan was afterwards explained to him at a distant period, he expressed his regret that he had not been made acquainted with it earlier; for he could at once have placed the poet on the Irish establishment, with a sufficient salary to enable him to prosecute his researches, and would have taken care to have had it continued to him during the whole period of his travels. From this time our poet, though he sometimes talked of his plan, appears to have for ever relinquished the design of travelling into Asia.

Independent of every consideration of interest or ambition, the introduction of Goldsmith to a nobleman of such high rank as the Earl of Northumberland, was a circumstance sufficiently

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gratifying to a mind fond of distinction. In fact, the vanity of our poet was greatly excited by the honour of the interview with his lordship: and, for a considerable time after, it was much the subject of allusion and reference in his conversation. One of those ingenious executors of the law, a bailif, having come to the knowledge of this circumstance, determined to turn it to his advantage in the execution of a writ which he had against the poet for a small debt. He wrote Goldsmith a letter, stating that he was steward to a nobleman who was charmed with reading his last production, and had ordered him to desire the doctor to appoint a place where he might have the honour of meeting him, to conduct him to his lordship. Goldsmith swallowed the bait without hesitation; he appointed the British Coffee-house, to which he was accompanied by his friend Mr Hamilton, the proprietor and printer of the Critical Review, who in vain remonstrated on the singularity of the application. On entering the coffee-room, the bailif paid his respects to the poet, and desired that he might have the honour of immediately attending him. They had scarcely entered Pall-Mall, on their way to his lordship, when the bailif produced his writ, to the infinite astonishment and chagrin of our author. Mr Hamilton, however, immediately interfered, generously paid the money, and redeemed the poet from captivity.

Soon after the publication of the «Traveller,» Goldsmith appears to have fixed his abode in the Temple, where he ever afterwards resided. His apartments were first in the library staircase, next in the King's-Bench-walk, and ultimately at N° 2, in Brick-court. Here he had chambers in the first floor, elegantly furnished, and here he was often visited by literary friends, distinguished alike by their rank, talents, and acquirements. In the number of those with whom he now associated, and could rank among his friends, he was able to exhibit a list of the most eminent and conspicuous men of the time, among whom may be particularized the names of Burke, Fox, Johnson, Percy, Reynolds, Garrick, Colman, Dyer, Jones, Boswell, and Beauclerk, with the Lords Nugent and Charlemont. The mention of

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these names naturally calls up the recollection of the famous Literary Club of which Goldsmith was one of the earliest members, and of which the conversational anecdotes, reported by Mr Boswell, have contributed to give so much interest to the pages of that gentleman's biography of Johnson. As our author continued a member of this select society from its foundation till his death, and shone as one of its most conspicuous ornaments, some account of its institution, and a notice of the names of its members till the present time, all of whom have more or less figured in the literary or political world, may not be unacceptable to many of our readers.

This literary association is said by Mr Boswell to have been founded in 1764, but Dr Percy is of opinion that its institution was not so early. Sir Joshua Reynolds had the merit of being the first to suggest it to Dr Johnson and Mr Burke; and they having acceded to the proposal, the respective friends of these three were invited to join them. The original members, therefore, as they stand on the records of the society, were Sir Joshua Reynolds,[1] Dr Johnson, Mr Edmund Burke, Dr Nugent,[2] Mr Beauclerk, Mr Langton, Dr Goldsmith, Mr Chamier, and Sir John Hawkins; and to this number there was added soon afterwards Mr Samuel Dyer.[3] It existed long without a name, but at the funeral of Mr Garrick became distinguished by the title of the Literary Club. The members met and supped together one evening in every week, at the Turk's Head, in Gerrard-street, Soho. Their meetings commenced at seven; and by means of

[1] Neither Sir Joshua nor Sir John Hawkins had then been knighted, nor had Johnson been presented with his diploma of LL. D.; but both here and on other occasions the parties are noticed by their most common appellations.

[2] This gentleman was a physician, father of Mr Burke's wife; not the Dr Nugent who published some volumes of travels, and several philosophical works, for whom he has been sometimes mistaken. The above Dr Nugent was a very amiable man, and highly respected by his contemporaries.

[3] This gentleman was one of the intimate friends of Mr Burke, who inserted in the public papers the following character of him at the time of his death, which happened on Monday, September 14, 1772:

«On Monday morning died at his lodgings in Castle-street, Leicester Fields, Samuel Dyer, Esq. Fellow of the Royal Society. He was a man of profound and

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the inexhaustible conversational powers of Johnson, Burke, and Beauclerk, their sittings were generally protracted till a pretty late hour. It was originally intended that the number of members should be made up to twelve, but for the first three or four years it never exceeded nine or ten; and it was understood that if even only two of these should chance to meet, they would be able to entertain one another for the evening.

About the beginning of 1768, the attending or efficient members were reduced to eight; first by the secession of Mr Beauclerk, who became estranged by the gayer attractions of more fashionable clubs; and next by the retirement of Sir John Hawkins.

Soon after this it was proposed by Dr Johnson to elect a supply of new members, and to make up their number to twelve, the election to be made by ballot, and one black ball to be sufficient for the exclusion of a candidate. The doctor's proposal was immediately carried into effect by the election of Sir Robert Chambers, Dr Percy, and the late George Colman; and these three were introduced as new members on Monday evening, February 15, 1768. Mr Beauclerk having desired to be restored to the society, was re-elected about the same time.

From this period till 1772 the club consisted of the same members, and its weekly meetings were regularly continued every Monday evening till December that year, when the night of meeting was altered to Friday. Shortly afterwards there were no less than four vacancies occasioned by death. These were supplied, first by the Earl of Charlemont and David Garrick, who were elected on the 12th of March, 1773; and next by Mr

general erudition; and his sagacity and judgment were fully equal to the extent of his learning. His mind was candid, sincere, benevolent; his friendship disinterested and unalterable. The modesty, simplicity, and sweetness of his manners, rendered his conversation as amiable as it was instructive, and endeared him to those few who had the happiness of knowing intimately that valuable unostentatious man; and his death is to them a loss irreparable.»

Mr Dyer was held in high estimation for his erudition by Dr Johnson, but we know not of any literary work in which he was concerned, except that he corrected and improved the translation of Plutarch's Lives, by Dryden and others, when it was revived by Tonson.

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(afterwards Sir William) Jones and Mr Boswell, the former of whom was elected on the 2d, and the latter on the 30th of April following. In adverting to the election of Mr Garrick, it may not be deemed impertinent to notice an error on the part of Sir John Hawkins, in his « Life of Johnson.» Speaking of that gentleman's wish to become a member of the club, « Garrick,» says the knight, « trusted that the least intimation of a desire to come among us would procure him a ready admission; but in this he was mistaken. Johnson consulted me upon it; and when I could find no objection to receiving him, exclaimed, « he will disturb us by his buffoonery!» and afterwards so managed matters, that he was never formally proposed, and by consequence never admitted.

In justice both to Mr Garrick and Dr Johnson, Mr Boswell has rectified this mis-statement. « The truth is,» says he, « that not very long after the institution of our club, Sir Joshua Reynolds was speaking of it to Garrick: 'I like it much (said the latter); I think I shall be of you.' When Sir Joshua mentioned this to Dr Johnson, he was much displeased with the actor's conceit. '*He'll be of us* (said Johnson), how does he know we will *permit* him? The first duke in England has no right to hold such language.' However, when Garrick was regularly proposed some time afterwards, Johnson, though he had taken a momentary offence at his arrogance, warmly and kindly supported him; and he was accordingly elected, was a most agreeable member, and continued to attend our meetings to the time of his death.» This statement, while it corrects the inaccuracy of Sir John, affords also a proof of the estimation in which the Literary Club was held by its own members, and the nicety that might be opposed to the admission of a candidate. The founders appear to have been somewhat vain of the institution, both as *unique* in its kind, and as distinguished by the learning and talent of its members. Dr Johnson, in particular, seems to have had a sort of paternal anxiety for its prosperity and perpetuation, and on many occasions exhibited almost as jealous a care of its purity and reputation as of his own. Talking of a certain lord one day, a man of coarse manners, but a man of abilities and information,

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« I don't say,» continued Johnson, « he is a man I would set at the head of a nation, though perhaps he may be as good as the next prime minister that comes: but he is a man to be at the head of a club, I don't say *our* club, *for there is no such club.*» On another occasion, when it was mentioned to him by Mr Beauclerk that Dr Dodd had once wished to be a member of the club, Johnson observed, « I should be sorry indeed if any of our club were hanged;» and added, jocularly, « I will not say but some of them deserve it,» alluding to their politics and religion, which were frequently in opposition to his own. But the high regard in which the doctor held this association was most strikingly evinced in the election of Mr Sheridan. In return for some literary civilities received from that gentleman while he had as yet only figured as a dramatist, Johnson thought the finest compliment he could bestow would be to procure his election to the Literary Club. When the ballot was proposed, therefore, he exerted his influence, and concluded his recommendation of the candidate by remarking, that « he who has written the two best comedies of his age, is surely a considerable man.» Sheridan had accordingly the honour to be elected. The importance thus attached by its members to this celebrated club, seems justified by time and public opinion. No association of a like kind has existed, and retained its original high character, for so long a period; and none has ever been composed of men so remarkable for extraordinary talent.

In 1774, an accession of new members was added by the election of the Hon. Charles James Fox, Sir Charles Bunbury, Dr George Fordyce, and George Steevens, Esq.; and this brings the annals of the club down to the death of Goldsmith. Either then, or soon after, the number of the members was increased to thirty; and, in 1776, instead of supping once a-week, they resolved to dine together once a-fortnight during the sitting of Parliament; and now the meetings take place every other Tuesday at Parsloe's, in St James's-street. It is believed, that this increase in the number of the members, originally limited to twelve, took place in consequence of a suggestion on the part of our author. Conversing with Johnson and Sir Joshua Reynolds

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one day, Goldsmith remarked, « that he wished for some additional members to the Literary Club, to give it an agreeable variety; for (said he) there can be nothing new among us; we have travelled over one another's minds.» Johnson, however, did not like the idea that *his* mind could be travelled over or exhausted, and seemed rather displeased; but Sir Joshua thought Goldsmith in the right, observing, that « where people have lived a great deal together, they know what each of them will say on every subject. A new understanding, therefore, is desirable; because, though it may only furnish the same sense upon a question which would have been furnished by those with whom we are accustomed to live, yet this sense will have a different colouring; and colouring is of much effect in every thing else as well as painting.»[1]

[1] From the institution of the Literary Club to the present time, it is believed that the following is a correct list of the members:—

* Lord Ashburton (Dunning).
* Sir Joseph Banks.
* Marquis of Bath.
* Dr Barnard, Bishop of Kilaloe.
* Mr Topham Beauclerk.
* Sir Charles Blagden.
* Mr Boswell.
* Sir Charles Bunbury.
* Right Hon. Edmund Burke.
* Richard Burke (his son).
* Dr Burney.
* Sir Robert Chambers.
Mr Chamier.
* Earl of Charlemont.
* George Colman.
Mr Courtney.
Dr Douglas, Bishop of Salisbury.
* Mr Dyer.
* Lord Elliot.
* Rev. Dr Farmer.
* Dr George Fordyce.
* Right Hon. C. J. Fox.
* David Garrick.
* Mr Gibbon.
* Dr Goldsmith.
* Sir William Hamilton.
* Sir John Hawkins.
* Dr Hinchliffe, Bishop of Peterborough.
* Dr Johnson.
* Sir William Jones.
* Mr Langton.
* Duke of Leeds.
* Earl Lucan.
* Earl Macartney.
* Mr Malone.
Dr Marlay, Bishop of Clonfert.
* Dr Nugent.
Hon. Frederick North (now Earl of Guilford).
* Earl of Upper Ossory.
* Viscount Palmerston.
* Dr Percy, Bishop of Dromore.
Major Rennel.
* Sir Joshua Reynolds.
Sir W. Scott (now Lord Stowell).
* Mr R. B. Sheridan.
* Dr Shipley, Bishop of St Asaph.

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In a society thus composed of men distinguished for genius, learning, and rank, where the chief object of the institution was social and literary enjoyment, it is certainly interesting to know what kind of intellectual sauce was usually served up to give a zest to their periodical suppers. Happily, Mr Boswell has supplied such a desideratum; and as a fair specimen of the numerous conversations which he has reported of the members, it may not be unamusing to our readers to be presented with part of the discussion which took place at the time of his own election in April, 1773, and a full report of the sitting of the club on the 24th of March, 1775. This we do with the more pleasure, on account of the first discussion being in some sort illustrative of the character and writings of our author.

"On Friday, April 30," says Mr Boswell, "I dined with Dr Johnson at Mr Beauclerk's, where were Lord Charlemont, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and some more members of the Literary Club, whom he had obligingly invited to meet me, as I was this evening to be balloted for as candidate for admission into that distinguished society. Johnson had done me the honour to propose me, and Beauclerk was very zealous for me.

"Goldsmith being mentioned, Johnson said, 'It is amazing how little Goldsmith knows. He seldom comes where he is not

* Dr Adam Smith.
Earl Spencer.
Mr William Lock, jun.
Mr George Ellis.
Lord Minto.
* Dr French Lawrence.
* Dr Horsley, Bishop of St Asaph.
Henry Vaughan, M.D.
* Mr George Steevens.
* Mr Agmendesham Vesey.
* Dr Warren.
* Dr Joseph Warton.
* Rev. Thomas Warton.
* Right Hon. William Windham.
Right Hon. George Canning.
Mr Marsden.
Right Hon. J. H. Frere.
Right Hon. Thos. Grenville.
* Rev. Dr Vincent, Dean of Westminster.
Right Hon. Sir William Grant, Master of the Rolls.
Sir George Staunton.
Mr Charles Wilkins.
Right Hon. William Drummond.

The members whose names are distinguished by an asterisk in the foregoing list have all paid the debt of nature. Among those who survive, it is generally understood that the spirit of the original association is still preserved.

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more ignorant than any one else.' Sir Joshua Reynolds, 'Yet there is no man whose company is more liked.' Johnson, 'To be sure, sir. When people find a man, of the most distinguished abilities as a writer, their inferiour while he is with them, it must be highly gratifying to them. What Goldsmith comically says of himself is very true, he always gets the better when he argues alone; meaning, that he is master of a subject in his study, and can write well upon it; but when he comes into company grows confused, and unable to talk. Take him as a poet, his «Traveller» is a very fine performance; ay, and so is his «Deserted Village,» were it not sometimes too much the echo of his «Traveller.» Whether, indeed, we take him as a poet, as a comic writer, or as a historian, he stands in the first class.' Boswell, 'A historian! my dear sir, you will not surely rank his compilation of the Roman History with the works of other historians of this age?' Johnson, 'Why, who is before him?' Boswell, 'Hume, Robertson, Lord Lyttelton.' Johnson (his antipathy to the Scotch beginning to rise), 'I have not read Hume; but, doubtless, Goldsmith's History is better than the *verbiage* of Robertson, or the foppery of Dalrymple.' Boswell, 'Will you not admit the superiority of Robertson, in whose History we find such penetration, such painting?' Johnson, 'Sir, you must consider how that penetration and that painting are employed. It is not history; it is imagination. He who describes what he never saw, draws from fancy. Robertson paints minds as Sir Joshua paints faces in a history-piece: he imagines a heroic countenance. You must look upon Robertson's work as romance, and try it by that standard. History it is not. Besides, sir, it is the great excellence of a writer to put into his book as much as his book will hold. Goldsmith has done this in his History. Now Robertson might have put twice as much into his book. Robertson is like a man who has packed gold in wool: the wool takes up more room than the gold. No, sir, I always thought Robertson would be crushed by his own weight—would be buried under his own ornaments. Goldsmith tells you shortly all you want to know; Robertson detains you a great deal too long. No man will read Robertson's cumbrous detail a second time; but Gold-

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smith's plain narrative will please again and again. I would say to Robertson what an old tutor of a college said to one of his pupils: « Read over your compositions, and wherever you meet with a passage which you think is particularly fine, strike it out.» Goldsmith's abridgment is better than that of Lucius Florus or Eutropius; and I will venture to say, that if you compare him with Vertot, in the same places of the Roman History, you will find that he excels Vertot. Sir, he has the art of compiling, and of saying every thing he has to say in a pleasing manner. He is now writing a Natural History, and will make it as entertaining as a Persian tale.'

« I cannot dismiss the present topic (continues Mr Boswell) without observing, that Dr Johnson, who owned that he often talked for victory, rather urged plausible objections to Dr Robertson's excellent historical works in the ardour of contest, than expressed his real and decided opinion; for it is not easy to suppose, that he should so widely differ from the rest of the literary world.

« Johnson, ' I remember once being with Goldsmith in Westminster Abbey. While we surveyed the Poet's-Corner, I said to him,—

Forsitan et nostrum nomen miscebitur istis, [1]

When we got to Temple-Bar he stopped me, pointed to the heads upon it, and slily whispered me,—

Forsitan et nostrum nomen miscebitur istis.' [2]

« Johnson praised John Bunyan highly. ' His « Pilgrim's Progress » has great merit, both for invention, imagination, and the conduct of the story; and it has had the best evidence of its merits, the general and continued approbation of mankind. Few books, I believe, have had a more extensive sale. It is remarkable, that it begins very much like the poem of Dante; yet there was no translation of Dante when Bunyan wrote. There is reason to think that he had read Spenser.'

[1] Ovid. de Art. Amand. l. iii. 5. 13.

[2] In allusion to Dr. Johnson's supposed political principles, and perhaps his own.

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« A proposition which had been agitated, that monuments to eminent persons should, for the time to come, be erected in St Paul's Church as well as in Westminster Abbey, was mentioned; and it was asked, who should be honoured by having his monument first erected? Somebody suggested Pope. Johnson, 'Why, sir, as Pope was a Roman Catholic, I would not have his to be first. I think Milton's rather should have the precedence. I think more highly of him now than I did at twenty. There is more thinking in him and Butler than in any of our poets.'

« The gentlemen (continues Mr Boswell) now went away to their club, and I was left at Beauclerk's till the fate of my election should be announced to me. I sat in a state of anxiety, which even the charming conversation of Lady Di Beauclerk could not entirely dissipate. In a short time I received the agreeable intelligence that I was chosen. I hastened to the place of meeting, and was introduced to such a society as can seldom be found. Mr Edmund Burke, whom I then saw for the first time, and whose splendid talents had long made me ardently wish for his acquaintance; Dr Nugent, Mr Garrick, Dr Goldsmith, Mr (afterwards Sir William) Jones, and the company with whom I had dined. Upon my entrance, Johnson placed himself behind a chair, on which he leaned as on a desk or pulpit, and, with humorous formality, gave me a *charge*, pointing out the conduct expected from me as a member of this club.»

The next conversational specimen given by Mr Boswell, is of the discussion which took place at the meeting of 24th March, 1775. « Before Johnson came in, we talked of his 'Journey to the Western Islands,' and of his coming away 'willing to believe the second sight,' which seemed to excite some ridicule. I was then so impressed with the truth of many of the stories of which I had been told, that I avowed my conviction, saying 'He is only *willing* to believe; I *do* believe. The evidence is enough for me, though not for his great mind. What will not fill a quart bottle will fill a pint bottle. I am filled with belief.' 'Are you,' said Colman, 'then cork it up.'

« I found his 'Journey' the common topic of conversation in

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London at this time, wherever I happened to be. At one of Lord Mansfield's formal Sunday evening conversations, strangely called *levees*, his Lordship addressed me, 'We have all been reading your Travels, Mr Boswell.' I answered, 'I was but the humble attendant of Dr Johnson.' The Chief-Justice replied, with that air and manner which none who ever heard or saw him can forget, 'He speaks ill of nobody but Ossian.'

« Johnson was in high spirits this evening at the club, and talked with great animation and success. He attacked Swift, as he used to do upon all occasions: 'The « Tale of a Tub » is so much superiour to his other writings, that we can hardly believe he was the author of it: there is in it such a vigour of mind, such a swarm of thoughts, so much of nature, and art, and life.' I wondered to hear him say of 'Gulliver's Travels,' 'When once you have thought of big and little men, it is very easy to do all the rest.' I endeavoured to make a stand for Swift, and tried to rouse those who were much more able to defend him; but in vain. Johnson at last, of his own accord, allowed very great merit to the inventory of articles found in the pocket of 'the Man Mountain,' particularly the description of his watch, which it was conjectured was his god, as he consulted it upon all occasions. He observed, that 'Swift put his name to but two things (after he had a name to put), the « Plan of the Improvement of the English Language,» and the last « Drapier's Letters.» '

« From Swift there was an easy transition to Mr Thomas Sheridan. Johnson, 'Sheridan is a wonderful admirer of the tragedy of Douglas, and presented its author with a gold medal. Some years ago, at a Coffee-house in Oxford, I called to him « Mr Sheridan, Mr Sheridan, how came you to give a gold medal to Home, for writing that foolish play?» This, you see, was wanton and insolent; but I *meant* to be wanton and insolent. A medal has no value but as a stamp of merit. And was Sheridan to assume to himself the right of giving that stamp? If Sheridan was magnificent enough to bestow a gold medal as an honorary reward of dramatic excellence, he should have requested one of the universities to choose the person on whom it

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should be conferred. Sheridan had no right to give a stamp of merit: it was counterfeiting Apollo's coin.'»

Now that Goldsmith had acquired fame as a poet of the first rank, and was associated with the wit and talent that belonged to this celebrated club, his publisher, Mr Newberry, thought he might venture to give «The Vicar of Wakefield» to the world. It was accordingly brought out in 1766, and not only proved a most lucrative speculation for the bookseller, but brought a fresh accession of literary celebrity to its author. Notwithstanding the striking merit of this work, it is a fact not less singular than true, that the literary friends to whom Goldsmith submitted it for criticism, before publication, were divided in opinion as to the probability of its success; and it is still more singular that Dr Johnson himself should have entertained doubts on the subject. It has been asserted, that the publisher put it to press in the crude state in which he found it, when the bargain was made with Johnson for the manuscript; but such a conclusion is obviously erroneous. Goldsmith was at that time on the best terms with Newberry, and engaged in the completion of various minor pieces for him; and as the fame of the one as well as the profit of the other were equally at stake on the success of the performance, it is exceedingly improbable that both author and publisher should be regardless of such revisal and correction as was clearly for the benefit of both. That Goldsmith did alter and revise this work before publication, may be gathered from a conversation which took place between Johnson and Mr. Boswell. «Talking of a friend of ours,» says the latter, «who associated with persons of very discordant principles and characters, I said he was a very universal man, quite a man of the world.» «Yes, sir,» said Johnson, «but one may be so much a man of the world, as to be nothing in the world. I remember a passage in Goldsmith's 'Vicar of Wakefield,' which he was afterwards fool enough to expunge; '*I do not love a man who is zealous for nothing.*'» Boswell, «That was a fine passage.» Johnson, «Yes, sir; there was another fine passage which he struck out: '*When I was a young man, being anxious to distinguish myself, I was perpetually starting new pro-*

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positions; but I soon gave this over; for I found that generally what was new was false.' »

The « Vicar of Wakefield » has long been considered one of the most interesting tales in our language. It is seldom that a story presenting merely a picture of common life, and a detail of domestic events, so powerfully affects the reader. The irresistible charm this novel possesses, evinces how much may be done, without the aid of extravagant incident, to excite the imagination and interest the feelings. Few productions of the kind afford greater amusement in the perusal, and still fewer inculcate more impressive lessons of morality. Though wit and humour abound in every page, yet in the whole volume there is not one thought injurious in its tendency, nor one sentiment that can offend the chastest ear. Its language, in the words of an elegant writer, is what « angels might have heard and virgins told. » In the delineation of his characters, in the conduct of his fable, and in the moral of the piece, the genius of the author is equally conspicuous. The hero displays with unaffected simplicity the most striking virtues that can adorn social life: sincere in his professions, humane and generous in his disposition, he is himself a pattern of the character he represents. The other personages are drawn with similar discrimination. Each is distinguished by some peculiar feature; and the general grouping of the whole has this particular excellence, that not one could be wanted without injuring the unity and beauty of the design. The drama of the tale is also managed with equal skill and effect. There are no extravagant incidents, and no forced or improbable situations; one event rises out of another in the same easy and natural manner as flows the language of the narration; the interest never flags, and is kept up to the last by the expedient of concealing the real character of Burchell. But it is the moral of the work which entitles the author to the praise of supereminent merit in this species of writing. No writer has arrived more successfully at the great ends of a moralist. By the finest examples, he inculcates the practice of benevolence, patience in suffering, and reliance on the providence of God.

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A short time after the publication of the « Vicar of Wakefield,» Goldsmith printed his beautiful ballad of the « Hermit.» His friend Dr Percy had published, in the same year, « Reliques of Ancient English Poetry;» and as the « Hermit» was found to bear some resemblance to a tale in that collection, entitled « The Friar of Orders Gray,» the scribblers of the time availed themselves of the circumstance to tax him with plagiarism. Irritated at the charge, he published a letter in the St James's Chronicle, vindicating the priority of his own poem, and asserting that the plan of the other must have been taken from his. It is probable, however, that both poems were taken from a very ancient ballad in the same collection, beginning « Gentle Heardsman.» Our author had seen and admired this ancient poem, in the possession of Dr Percy, long before it was printed; and some of the stanzas he appears, perhaps undesignedly, to have imitated in the « Hermit,» as the reader will perceive on examining the following specimens :—

FROM THE OLD BALLAD.

And grew soe coy and nice to please,
As women's lookes are often soe,
He might not kisse, nor hand forsoothe,
Unless I willed him soe to doe.

Thus being wearyed with delayes,
To see I pittyed not his greeffe,
He gott him to a secrett place,
And there hee dyed without releeffe.

And for his sake these weeds I weare,
And sacrifice my tender age;
And every day I'll beg my bread,
To undergoe this pilgrimage.

Thus every day I fast and pray,
And ever will doe till I dye;
And gett me to some secrett place;
For soe did hee, and soe will I.

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FROM THE HERMIT.

For still I tried each fickle art,
Importunate and vain;
And while his passion touch'd my heart,
I triumph'd in his pain.

Till, quite dejected by my scorn,
He left me to my pride;
And sought a solitude forlorn,
In secret, where he died.

But mine the sorrow, mine the fault,
And well my life shall pay;
I'll seek the solitude he sought,
And stretch me where he lay.

And there forlorn, despairing, hid,
I'll lay me down and die;
'Twas so for me that Edwin did,
And so for him will I.

There has been an attempt, in later days, to cast a doubt upon the title of Goldsmith to the whole of this poem. It has been asserted that the «Hermit» was a translation of an ancient French poem entitled «Raimond and Angeline.» The pretended original made its appearance in a trifling periodical publication, entitled «The Quiz.» It bears internal evidence of being in reality an imitation of Goldsmith's poem. The frivolous source of this flippant attack, and its transparent falsity, would have caused it to pass unnoticed here, had it not been made a matter of grave discussion in some periodical journals. To enter into a detailed refutation would be absurd.

The poem of «The Hermit» was at first inscribed to the Countess (afterwards Duchess) of Northumberland, who had shown a partiality for productions of this kind, by patronizing Percy's «Reliques of Ancient English Poetry.» This led to a renewed intercourse with the duke, to whom we have already narrated Goldsmith's first visit; but the time had gone by when his grace

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could have been politically useful, and we do not know that our author reaped any other advantage from the notice that nobleman took of him, than the gratification of being recognized by a man of the duke's high rank as a literary friend.

This distinguished peer and his duchess were accustomed to spend part of each summer at Bath; and one year, after their return to London, her grace related to Dr Percy, with considerable humour, the following occurrence, characteristic of our author's occasional abstraction of mind. On one of the parades at Bath, the duke and Lord Nugent had hired two adjacent houses. Goldsmith, who was then resident on a visit with the latter, one morning walked up into the duke's dining-room, as he and the duchess were preparing to sit down to breakfast. In a manner the most free and easy he threw himself on a sofa; and, as he was then perfectly known to them both, they inquired of him the Bath news of the day. But perceiving him to be rather in a meditative humour, they rightly guessed there was some mistake, and endeavoured, by easy and cheerful conversation to prevent his becoming embarrassed. When breakfast was served up, they invited him to stay and partake of it; and then poor Goldsmith awoke from his reverie, declared he thought he had been in the house of his friend Lord Nugent, and with confusion hastily withdrew; not, however, till the good-humoured duke and duchess had made him promise to dine with them.

Something akin to this incident, is the well-known blunder committed by our author during a conversation with the Earl of Shelbourne. One evening, while in company with this nobleman, Goldsmith, after a variety of conversation, fell into a fit of musing. At last, as if suddenly recovering from his abstraction, he addressed his lordship abruptly in this manner:—«My lord, I have often wondered why every body should call your lordship *Malagrida;* for Malagrida, you know, was a very good man.» The well-bred peer only replied to this awkward compliment by a smile, and the heedless poet went on totally unconscious of his error. It was afterwards remarked by Dr Johnson, that this mistake of Goldsmith was only a blunder in

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emphasis, and that the expression meant nothing more than, « I wonder they should use *Malagrida* as a term of reproach.»

About this period, or perhaps a little earlier, Goldsmith, in addition to the apartments he occupied in the Temple, took a country-house on the Edgeware-road, in conjunction with a Mr Bott, one of his literary friends, for the benefit of good air, and the convenience of retirement. To this little mansion he gave the jocular appellation of *Shoemaker's Paradise*, the architecture being in a fantastic style, after the taste of its original possessor, who was one of the craft. Here he began and finished one of his most pleasing and successful compilations, a « History of England, in a Series of Letters from a Nobleman to his Son.» This little work was at first published anonymously, and was very generally ascribed to the pen of Lord Lyttelton. That nobleman then held some rank in the world of letters, and as the chief feature in the performance was an easy elegance of language, without much depth of thought, or investigation, the public were the more easily betrayed into a belief that it was the work of his lordship. It had likewise the honour to be ascribed to the Earl of Orrery, and some other noble authors of that period. That it was really the production of Goldsmith, however, was soon afterwards generally known; a circumstance which, in all probability, greatly enhanced its value in the estimation of the world. Few books have had a more extensive sale or wider circulation.

The fame our author had now acquired as a critic, a novelist, and a poet, prompted him to adventure in the drama. His first effort produced « The Good-natured Man.» This comedy was offered to Garrick, to be brought out at his theatre of Drury-Lane; but after much fluctuation between doubt and encouragement, with his customary hesitation and uncertainty, he at length declined it. The conduct of Garrick in this instance was the more surprising, as the piece had been read and applauded in manuscript by most of the author's literary friends, and had not only the sanction of Burke's critical judgment, but Johnson himself had engaged to write the prologue. Colman, the manager of Covent-Garden Theatre, was, however,

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not so scrupulous; especially when he found it presented under such patronage. It was therefore agreed that it should be produced at his theatre; and it was represented there for the first time on the 29th of January, 1768. Contrary to the expectations of the author and his friends, it did not meet with unqualified applause; and though it kept possession of the stage nine nights, it was finally withdrawn. The peculiar genius of its author was apparent in the ease and elegance of the dialogue, and throughout the whole there were many keen remarks on men and manners; but the piece was deficient in stage-effect. The Bailif scene, in particular, was generally reprobated, though the characters were well drawn. This scene was afterwards greatly abridged. Whatever were the faults of the piece as a whole, it was admitted that many of the parts possessed great comic effect, and these were highly applauded. The part of Croaker, in particular, was allowed to be excellent. It was admirably supported by Shuter, the most popular comedian of his day. The drollery of his manner while reading the incendiary letter in the fourth act, and his expression of the different passions by which he was agitated, were so irresistibly comical, that he brought down thunders of applause. Goldsmith himself was so overcome with the acting of Shuter, that he expressed his delight before the whole company, assuring him that « he had exceeded his own idea of the character, and that the fine comic richness of his colouring made it almost appear as new to him as to any other person in the house.» Dr Johnson furnished the prologue, and publicly declared, that in his opinion «The Good-natured Man» was the best comedy that had appeared since «The Provoked Husband.» He dwelt with much complacency on the character of Croaker, and averred that none equal to it in originality had for a long time been exhibited on the stage. Goldsmith used to acknowledge, that for his conception of this character he was indebted to Johnson's Suspirius in the « Rambler.» That of Honeywood, in its undistinguishing benevolence, bears some resemblance to his own. «The Good-natured Man» has undoubtedly great merit; and though deficient in effect for the stage, will always be a fa-

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vourite in the closet. Mr Cumberland remarks, that it «has enough to justify the good opinion of its literary patrons, and secure its author against any loss of reputation; for it has the stamp of a man of talents upon it, though its popularity with the audience did not quite keep pace with the expectations that were grounded on the fiat it had antecedently been honoured with.» Short as its career was, however, its author, by the sale of the copy, and the profits of his three nights, acquired not less than five hundred pounds,—a sum which enabled him to enlarge his domestic establishment, and improve his style of living, though it is believed on rather a too expensive scale. On removing, at this time, from an attic in the Inner-Temple, to elegant chambers in Brick-court, Middle-Temple, he is said to have laid out upwards of four hundred pounds.

Goldsmith's improved circumstances, did not, however, compensate for the vexations he suffered from the virulence of some of the periodical critics. «At that time,» says Mr Cumberland, «there was a nest of vipers in league against every name to which any degree of celebrity was attached; and they kept their hold upon the papers till certain of their leaders were compelled to fly their country, some to save their ears, and some to save their necks. They were well known; and, I am sorry to say, some men whose minds should have been superiour to any terrors they could hold out, made suit to them for favour, nay even combined with them on some occasions, and were mean enough to enrol themselves under their despicable banners.» From this class of critics, poor Goldsmith's sensitive feelings suffered the horrors of crucifixion. To add to his mortification, the comedy of «False Delicacy,» written by his friend Kelly, came out at Drury-Lane Theatre about the same time with «The Good-natured Man» at Covent-Garden, and had such an unexampled run of success, that it was said to have driven its opponent fairly off the field. This might, perhaps, be in some measure owing to the able management of Garrick, under whose special superintendence it was got up; but at that time sentimental writing was the prevailing taste of the town, and Kelly's piece was the finest specimen of the senti-

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mental school that had appeared. Although «False Delicacy,» according to Dr Johnson, was «totally devoid of character,» no less than ten thousand copies were sold in the course of only one season; and the booksellers concerned in the copyright, as a mark of the sense they entertained of the comedy, evinced by its extraordinary sale, presented Kelly with a piece of plate of considerable value, and gave a sumptuous entertainment to him and his friends. These circumstances so wrought upon the irritable feelings of Goldsmith, in whose disposition, warm and generous as it was, envy had an unhappy predominance, that he renounced the friendship of Kelly, and could with difficulty be brought to forgive him this temporary success. Our author, though in the chief features of his character the original of his own «Good-natured Man,» was yet strangely jealous of the success of others, and particularly in whatever regarded literary fame.

We find it difficult to reconcile the possession of so odious a quality with affectionate habits and benevolent propensities like his. True it is, however, that he was prone to indulge this unamiable passion to so ridiculous an excess, that the instances of it are hardly credible. When accompanying two beautiful young ladies,[1] with their mother, on a tour in France, he was amusingly angry that more attention was paid to them than to him. And once, at the exhibition of the *Fantoccini* in London, when those who sat next him observed with what dexterity a puppet was made to toss a pike, he could not bear that it should have such praise, and exclaimed with some warmth, «Pshaw! I can do it better myself.» In fact, on his way home with Mr Burke to supper, he broke his shin, by attempting to exhibit to the company how much better he could jump over a stick than the puppets.

His envy of Johnson was one day strongly exhibited at the house of Sir Joshua Reynolds. While the doctor was relating to the circle there assembled the particulars of his celebrated interview with the king, Goldsmith remained unmoved upon a sofa

[1] The Miss Hornecks, one of whom was afterwards married to Henry Bunbury, Esq. and the other to Colonel Gwyn.

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at some distance, affecting not to join in the least in the eager curiosity of the company. At length, however, the frankness and simplicity of his natural character prevailed. He sprung from the sofa, advanced to Johnson, and in a kind of flutter, from imagining himself in the situation he had just been hearing described, exclaimed, « Well, you acquitted yourself in this conversation better than I should have done; for I should have bowed and stammered through the whole of it.»

On another occasion, during an interesting argument carried on by Johnson, Mayo, and Toplady, at the table of Messrs Dilly, the booksellers, 'Goldsmith sat in restless agitation, from a wish to get in and *shine*. Finding himself excluded, he had taken his hat to go away, but remained for some time with it in his hand, like a gamester who, at the close of a long night, lingers for a little while, to see if he can have a favourable opening to finish with success. Once when he was beginning to speak, he found himself overpowered by the loud voice of Johnson, who was at the opposite end of the table, and did not perceive Goldsmith's attempt. Thus disappointed of his wish to obtain the attention of the company, Goldsmith in a passion threw down his hat, looking angrily at Johnson, and exclaiming in a bitter tone, « *Take it.*» When Toplady was going to speak, Johnson uttered some sound, which led Goldsmith to think that he was beginning again, and taking the words from Toplady. Upon which he seized this opportunity of venting his own spleen, under the pretext of supporting another person: « Sir,» said he to Johnson, « the gentleman has heard you patiently for an hour: pray allow us now to hear him.» Johnson replied, « Sir, I was not interrupting the gentleman; I was only giving him a signal of my attention. Sir, you are impertinent.» Goldsmith made no reply. Johnson, Boswell, and Mr Langton, towards the evening, adjourned to the club, where they found Burke, Garrick, and some other members, and amongst them their friend Goldsmith, who sat silently brooding over Johnson's reprimand to him after dinner. Johnson perceived this, and said aside to some of them, «I'll make Goldsmith forgive me;» and then called to him in a loud voice,

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« Dr Goldsmith,—something passed to-day where you and I dined; I ask your pardon.» Goldsmith answered placidly, « It must be much from you, sir, that I take ill.» And so at once the difference was over; they were on as easy terms as ever, and Goldsmith rattled away as usual.'

The tincture of envy thus conspicuous in the disposition of our author, was accompanied by another characteristic feature, more innocent but withal exceedingly ridiculous. He was vain of imaginary qualifications, and had an incessant desire of being conspicuous in company; and this was the occasion of his sometimes appearing to such disadvantage as one should hardly have supposed possible in a man of his genius. When his literary reputation had risen deservedly high, and his society was much courted, his jealousy of the great attention paid to Johnson was more strikingly apparent. One evening, in a circle of wits, he found fault with Boswell for talking of Johnson as entitled to the honour of unquestionable superiority. « Sir,» said he, « you are for making a monarchy of what should be a republic.»

He was still more mortified, when, talking in a company with fluent vivacity, and, as he flattered himself, to the admiration of all who were present, a German who sat next him, and perceived Johnson rolling himself, as if about to speak, suddenly stopped him, saying, « Stay, stay; Toctor Shonson is going to say something.» This was very provoking to one so irritable as Goldsmith, who frequently mentioned it with strong expressions of indignation.

There is thus much to be said, however, for the envy of Goldsmith. It was rarely excited but on occasions of mere literary competition; and, perhaps, appeared much more conspicuous in him than other men, because he had less art, and never attempted to conceal it. Mr Boswell used to defend him against Dr Johnson for this fault, on the ground of his frank and open avowal of it on all occasions; but Johnson had the best of the argument. « He talked of it to be sure often enough,» said the latter, « but he had so much of it that he could not conceal it. Now, sir, what a man avows, he is not ashamed to think; though many a man thinks what he is ashamed to avow. We are all

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envious naturally; but by checking envy, we get the better of it. So we are all thieves naturally; a child always tries to get at what it wants the nearest way: by good instructions and good habits this is cured, till a man has not even an inclination to seize what is another's; has no struggle with himself about it.» But, after all, if ever envy was entitled to be called innocent, it certainly was so in the person of Goldsmith. Whatever of this kind appeared in his conduct was but a momentary sensation, which he knew not like other men how to disguise or conceal. Rarely did it influence the general tenor of his conduct, and, it is believed, was never once known to have embittered his heart.

While Goldsmith was occupied with his comedy of the « Good-natured Man,» he was, as usual, busily employed in the compilation of various publications for the booksellers, particularly a series of histories for the instruction of young readers. These were, his « History of Rome,» in 2 vols. 8vo. and the « History of England,» in 4 vols. 8vo. The « History of Greece,» in 2 vols. 8vo. published under his name after his death, cannot with certainty be ascribed to his pen. For the « History of England,» Davies the bookseller contracted to pay him 500*l.* and for an abridgment of the Roman history, the sum of fifty guineas.[1]

[1] The articles of agreement relative to these works between the bookseller and Goldsmith having been preserved, we quote them for the gratification of our reader's curiosity, especially as they were drawn up by the Doctor himself.

« MEMORANDUM.

« *Russell-street, Covent-Garden.*

« It is agreed between Oliver Goldsmith, M. B., on the one hand, and Thomas Davies, bookseller, of Russell-street, Covent-Garden, on the other, that Oliver Goldsmith shall write for Thomas Davies, a History of England, from the birth of the British Empire, to the death of George the II., in four volumes, octavo, of the size and letter of the Roman History, written by Oliver Goldsmith. The said History of England shall be written and compiled in the space of two years from the date hereof. And when the said History is written and delivered in manuscript, the printer giving his opinion that the quantity above mentioned is completed, that then Oliver Goldsmith shall be paid by Thomas Davies the sum of 500*l.* sterling, for

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These historical compilations possess all the ease, grace, and simplicity, peculiar to the general style of their author, and are well calculated to attract young readers by the graces of composition. But the more advanced student of history must resort to other sources for information.

In the History of England, in particular, there are several mis-statements; and one instance may be given from his account of a remarkable occurrence in the affairs of his own country, to which it might have been expected he would have paid more than ordinary attention. This is to be found in his narrative of the famous siege of Londonderry, in 1689, sustained against the French army during a hundred and four days, after the city was found to be without provisions for little more than a week, and had besides been abandoned by the military commanders as utterly untenable. For this memorable defence the country was indebted to the courage, conduct, and talents of the Rev. George Walker, a clergyman who happened to take refuge in the city after it was abandoned by the military. Under the direction of Walker, assisted by two officers accidentally in the place, the defence was conducted with so much skill, courage, and perseverance, and the citizens displayed such valour,

having written and compiled the same. It is agreed also, that Oliver Goldsmith shall print his name to the said work. In witness whereof we have set our names the 13th of June, 1769.

« Oliver Goldsmith.
« Thomas Davies.»

« MEMORANDUM.

« *September* 15, 1770.

« It is agreed between Oliver Goldsmith, M.B., and Thomas Davies, of Covent-Garden, bookseller, that Oliver Goldsmith shall abridge, for Thomas Davies, the book entitled Goldsmith's Roman History, in two volumes, 8vo, into one volume in 12mo, so as to fit it for the use of such as will not be at the expense of that in 8vo. For the abridging of the said history, and for putting his name thereto, said Thomas Davies shall pay Oliver Goldsmith fifty guineas; to be paid him on the abridgment and delivering of the copy. As witness our hands.

« Oliver Goldsmith.
« Thomas Davies.»

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patience, and fortitude, under innumerable hardships and privations, that the city was finally saved.[1] For his services on this occasion Mr Walker, who belonged to the Established Church, was afterwards created Bishop of Dromore by King William; but his military zeal prompted him to volunteer his services at the battle of the Boyne, where he was unfortunately killed. Of this extraordinary character Goldsmith takes a very slight and rather disrespectful notice, stating him to have been a dissenting minister, which he was not, and neglecting to record either his promotion or his death.[2]

Goldsmith, besides his regular employment in the compilation of these histories, had now all the other business of an author by profession. Either through friendship or for money, but oftener from charity to the needy or unsuccessful of his brethren, he was frequently engaged in the composition of prefaces, dedications, and introductions to the performances of other writers. These exhibit ingenious proofs of his ready talent at general writing, and for the most part give a much better display of the subjects treated of than could have been done by their own authors. But in this view he is rather to be considered as an advocate pleading the cause of another, than

[1] A curious journal which Mr Walker had kept of all the occurrences during the siege, was published at that period, in 4to, and was afterwards republished by the late Dr Brown, author of the Estimate, etc. One very providential circumstance happened to the besieged. Being reduced by the extremity of famine to eat every kind of unwholesome food, they were dying in great numbers of the bloody flux; but the accidental discovery of some concealed barrels of starch and tallow, relieved their hunger, and cured the dysentery at the same time.

[2] Our author's inaccuracy, with regard to Mr Walker, was corrected in the following letter addressed to him by Mr Woolsey, of Dundalk: «To Dr Goldsmith.—Sir, I beg leave to acquaint you, there is a mistake in your abridgment of the History of England, respecting Dr Walker, viz. 'one Walker, a dissenting minister.'

«I venture to assure you, Mr Walker was a clergyman of the Established Church of Ireland, who was appointed Bishop of Dromore by King William, for his services at Derry, but was unfortunately killed at the battle of the Boyne; which I hope you will be pleased to insert in future editions of your late book.

«The Duke of Schomberg was certainly killed in passing the river Boyne. I am, Sir, with great respect, your most obedient humble servant,

«*Dundalk, April* 10, 1772.» «THOMAS WOOLSEY.»

F.

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as delivering the sentiments of his own mind; for he often recommends the doubtful peculiarities, and even the defects of a work, which it is obvious, had he been engaged on the other side, he could with equal ability have detected and exposed. Something like this our readers will find in an Address to the Public, which was to usher in proposals for « A New History of the World, from the creation to the present time,» in 12 vols. 8vo. by Guthrie and others, to be printed for Newberry. This undertaking was to form an abridgment of all the volumes of the ancient and modern universal histories; and our author urges a great variety of topics in praise of such contractions and condensing of historical materials, which, with equal ingenuity, he could have opposed and refuted. But the whole is truly excellent as a composition. About the same time, he drew up a preface or introduction to Dr Brookes's « System of Natural History,» in 6 vols. 12mo. in itself a very dull and uninteresting work; but such an admirable display of the subject was given in the preface, which he rendered doubly captivating by the charms of his style, that the booksellers immediately engaged him to undertake his own larger work of the « History of the Earth and Animated Nature.» It was this work which Dr Johnson emphatically said, its author would « make as entertaining as a Persian Tale.» The result proved the accuracy of the judgment thus passed on it; for, although it contains numerous defects, yet the witchery of its language has kept it buoyant in spite of criticism. The numerous editions through which it has passed attest, that, if not a profound, it is at least a popular work; and few will be disposed to deny, that with all its faults, if not the most instructive, it is undoubtedly the most amusing work of the kind yet published. It would be absurd to aver, that an adept would find himself enlightened by the doctor's labours in that science; but a common reader will find his curiosity gratified, and that time agreeably disposed of which he bestows on this work. When our author engaged in this compilation, he resolved to make a translation of Pliny, and, by the help of a commentary, to make that agreeable writer more generally acceptable to the public; but the appearance

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of Buffon's work induced him to change his plan, and instead of translating an ancient writer, he resolved to imitate the last and best of the moderns who had written on the same subject. To this illustrious Frenchman Goldsmith acknowledges the highest obligations, but, unluckily, he has copied him without discrimination, and, while he selected his beauties, heedlessly adopted his mistakes.

In a serio-comical apostrophe to the author, Mr Cumberland observes, on the subject of this work, that « distress drove Goldsmith upon undertakings neither congenial with his studies, nor worthy of his talents. I remember him, when, in his chambers in the Temple, he showed me the beginning of his 'Animated Nature;' it was with a sigh, such as genius draws, when hard necessity diverts it from its bent to drudge for bread, and talk of birds, and beasts, and creeping things, which Pidcock's showman would have done as well. Poor fellow, he hardly knew an ass from a mule, nor a turkey from a goose, but when he saw it on the table. But publishers hate poetry, and Paternoster-row is not Parnassus. Even the mighty Dr Hill, who was not a very delicate feeder, could not make a dinner out of the press, till, by a happy transformation into Hannah Glass, he turned himself into a cook, and sold receipts for made-dishes to all the savoury readers in the kingdom. Then, indeed, the press acknowledged him second in fame only to John Bunyan: his feasts kept pace in sale with Nelson's Fasts; and when his own name was fairly written out of credit, he wrote himself into immortality under an *alias*. Now, though necessity, or I should rather say, the desire of finding money for a masquerade, drove Oliver Goldsmith upon abridging histories, and turning Buffon into English, yet I much doubt, if, without that spur, he would ever have put his Pegasus into action: no, if he had been rich, the world would have been poorer than it is, by the loss of all the treasures of his genius, and the contributions of his pen.»

Much in the same style was Goldsmith himself accustomed to talk of his mercenary labours. A poor writer consulted him one day on what subjects he might employ his pen with most

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profit: «My dear fellow,» said Goldsmith, laughing, indeed, but in good earnest, «pay no regard to the draggle-tail Muses; for my part, I have always found productions in prose more sought after and better paid for.»

On another occasion, one of his noble friends, whose classical taste he knew and admired, lamented to him his neglect of the Muses, and inquired of him why he forsook poetry, to compile histories, and write novels? «My lord,» said our author, «by courting the Muses I shall starve, but by my other labours, I eat, drink, and have good clothes, and enjoy the luxuries of life.» This is, no doubt, the reason that his poems bear so small a proportion to his other productions; but it is said, that he always reflected on these sacrifices to necessity with the bitterest regret.

Although Goldsmith thus toiled for a livelihood in the drudgery of compilation, we do not find that he had become negligent of fame. His leisure hours were still devoted to his Muse; and the next voluntary production of his pen was the highly-finished poem of «The Deserted Village.» Previous to its publication, the bookseller who had bargained for the manuscript, gave him a note for one hundred guineas. Having mentioned this soon afterwards to some of his friends, one of them remarked, that it was a very great sum for so short a performance. «In truth,» said Goldsmith, «I think so too; it is much more than the honest man can afford, or the piece is worth: I have not been easy since I received it; I will therefore go back and return him his note:» which he actually did, and left it entirely to the bookseller to pay him according to the success of the sale and the profits it might produce. His estimate of the value of this performance was formed from data somewhat singular for a poet, who most commonly appreciates his labours rather by their quality than their quantity. He computed, that a hundred guineas was equal to five shillings a couplet, which, he modestly observed, «was certainly too much, because more than he thought any publisher could afford, or, indeed, than any modern poetry whatever could be worth.» The sale of this poem, however, was so

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rapid and extensive, that the bookseller soon paid him the full amount of the note he had returned, with an acknowledgment for the disinterestedness he had evinced on the occasion.

Although criticism has allotted the highest rank to «The Traveller,» there is no doubt that «The Deserted Village» is the most popular and favourite poem of the two. Perhaps no poetical piece of equal length has been more universally read by all classes, or has more frequently supplied extracts for apt quotation. It abounds with couplets and single lines, so simply beautiful in sentiment, so musical in cadence, and so perfect in expression, that the ear is delighted to retain them for their melody, the mind treasures them for their truth, while their tone of tender melancholy indelibly engraves them on the heart. The characteristic of our author's poetry is a prevailing simplicity, which conceals all the artifices of versification; but it is not confined to his expression alone, for it pervades every feature of the poem. His delineation of rural scenery, his village portraits, his moral, political, and classical allusions, while marked by singular fidelity, chasteness, and elegance, are all chiefly distinguished for this pleasing and natural character. The finishing is exquisitely delicate, without being overwrought; and, with the feelings of tenderness and melancholy which runs through the poem, there is occasionally mixed up a slight tincture of pleasantry, which gives an additional interest to the whole.

«The Deserted Village» is written in the same style and measure with «The Traveller,» and may in some degree be considered a suite of that poem: pursuing some of the views and illustrating in their results some of the principles there laid down. But the poet is here more intimately interested in his subject. The case is taken from his own experience, the scenery drawn from his own home, and the application especially intended for his own country.

The main intention of the poem is to contrast agriculture with commerce, and to maintain that the former is the most worthy pursuit, both as it regards individual happiness and national prosperity. He proceeds to show that commerce, while it causes an influx of wealth, introduces also luxury, and its

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attendant vices and miseries. He dwells with pathos on the effects of those lordly fortunes which create little worlds of solitary magnificence around them, swallowing up the small farms in their wide and useless domains; thus throwing an air of splendour over the country, while in fact they hedge and wall out its real life and soul—its hardy peasantry.

> Ill fares the land, to hastn'ing ills a prey,
> Where wealth accumulates and men decay;
> Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade;
> A breath can make them as a breath has made;
> But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
> When once destroyed, can never be supplied.

The poet, again personified in the traveller, returns from his wanderings in distant countries to the village of his childhood. In the opening of the poem he draws from memory a minute and beautiful picture of the place, and fondly recals its simple sports and rustic gambols. In all his journeyings, his perils, and his sufferings, he had ever looked forward to this beloved spot, as the haven of repose for the evening of his days.

> And, as a hare, whom hounds and horns pursue,
> Pants to the place from whence at first he flew,
> I still had hopes, my long vexations past,
> Here to return, and die at home at last.

With these expectations he returns, after the lapse of several years, and finds the village deserted and desolate. A splendid mansion had risen in its neighbourhood; the cottages and hamlets had been demolished; their gardens and fields were thrown into parks and pleasure-grounds; and their rustic inhabitants, thrust out from their favourite abodes, had emigrated to another hemisphere.

> To distant climes, a dreary scene,
> Where half the convex world intrudes between,
> Through torrid tracts with fainting steps they go,
> Where wild Altama murmurs to their woe.

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Dejected at this disappointment of his cherished hope, the poet wanders among the faint traces of past scenes, contrasting their former life and gaiety with their present solitude and desolation. This gives occasion for some of the richest and mellowest picturing to be found in any poetry. The village-preacher and his modest mansion; the schoolmaster and his noisy troop; the alehouse and its grotesque frequenters, are all masterpieces of their kind.

The village alluded to in this poem is at present sufficiently ascertained to be Lishoy, near Ballymahon, in the county of Westmeath, Ireland, in which Goldsmith passed his youth. It has been remarked, that the description of the place and the people, together with the introduction of the nightingale, a bird, it is said, unknown in Irish ornithology, savour more of the rural scenery and rustic life of an English than an Irish village. But this presents no insuperable difficulty. Such licenses are customary in poetry; and it is notorious that the clear blue sky and the delicious temperature of Italy, have with much greater freedom been appropriated by English bards to deck out their descriptions of an English spring. It is evident, indeed, that Goldsmith meant to represent his village as an English one. He took from Lishoy, therefore, only such traits and characteristics as might be applied to village-life in England, and modified them accordingly. He took what belonged to human nature in rustic life, and adapted it to the allotted scene. In the same way a painter takes his models from real life around him, even when he would paint a foreign or a classic group. There is a verity in the scenes and characters of « The Deserted Village » that shows Goldsmith to have described what he had seen and felt; and it is upon record that an occurrence took place at Lishoy, during his lifetime, similar to that which produced the desolation of the village in the poem. This occurrence is thus related by the Rev. Dr Strean, of the diocese of Elphin, in a letter to Mr Mangin, and inserted in that gentleman's « Essay on light reading. »

« The poem of 'The Deserted Village,' » says Dr Strean, « took its origin from the circumstance of General Robert Napier, the

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grandfather of the gentleman who now lives in the house, within half a mile of Lishoy, built by the general, having purchased an extensive tract of the country surrounding Lishoy, or *Auburn;* in consequence of which, many families, here called *cottiers*, were removed to make room for the intended improvements of what was now to become the wide domain of a rich man, warm with the idea of changing the face of his new acquisition, and were forced, 'with fainting steps,' to go in search of 'torrid tracts,' and 'distant climes.'

« This fact alone might be sufficient to establish the seat of the poem; but there cannot remain a doubt in any unprejudiced mind, when the following are added; viz. that the character of the village-preacher, the above-named Henry, the brother of the poet, is copied from nature. He is described exactly as he lived; and his 'modest mansion' as it existed. Burn, the name of the village-master, and the site of his schoolhouse, and Catherine Giraghty, a lonely widow,

> The wretched matron, forced in age, for bread,
> To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread,

(and to this day the brook and ditches near the spot where her cabin stood abound with cresses), still remain in the memory of the inhabitants, and Catherine's children live in the neighbourhood. The pool, the busy mill, the house where 'nut-brown draughts inspired,' are still visited as the poetic scene; and the 'hawthorn bush,' growing in an open space in front of the house, which I knew to have three trunks, is now reduced to one, the other two having been cut, from time to time, by persons carrying pieces of it away to be made into toys, etc. in honour of the bard, and of the celebrity of his poem. All these contribute to the same proof; and the 'decent church,' which I attended for upwards of eighteen years, and which 'tops the neighbouring hill,' is exactly described as seen from Lishoy, the residence of the preacher.»

To the honour of Ireland, and in particular of a gentleman named Hogan, grandson to General Napier the destroyer, we

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are enabled to add that the village of Lishoy, now bearing its poetical name of Auburn, has been renovated and restored, at least as to its localities, to what it was in its happiest days. The parsonage, rescued from a legion of pigs and poultry, which had taken possession of its lower apartments, and relieved from loads of grain and fodder, under which its upper chambers had for some years groaned, has resumed its ancient title of Lishoy-house: the church yet crowns the hill, and is again entitled to the appellation of decent; the school-house maintains its station; and the village-inn, with its sign re-painted, its chambers re-whitewashed, and the varnished clock replaced in its corner, echoes once more with the voices of rustic politicians, merry peasants, and buxom maids,

> Half willing to be press'd,
> Who kiss the cup to pass it to the rest.

To render the dispensation of poetical justice still more complete, the usurping mansion, the erection of which occasioned the downfal of the village, has become dismantled and dilapidated, and has been converted into a barrack.[1]

[1] The following account of the renovation of this village is extracted from a number of the New Monthly Magazine. « About three miles from Ballymahon, a very central town in the sister kingdom, is the mansion and village of Auburn, so called by their present possessor, Captain Hogan. Through the taste and improvement of this gentleman, it is now a beautiful spot, although fifteen years since it presented a very bare and unpoetical aspect. This, however, was owing to a cause which serves strongly to corroborate the assertion, that Goldsmith had this scene in view when he wrote his poem of 'The Deserted Village.' The then possessor, General Napier, turned all his tenants out of their farms, that he might enclose them in his own private domain. Littleton, the mansion of the general, stands not far off, a complete emblem of the desolating spirit lamented by the poet, dilapidated and converted into a barrack.

« The chief object of attraction is Lishoy, once the parsonage-house of Henry Goldsmith, that brother to whom the poet dedicated his 'Traveller,' and who is represented as the Village Pastor,

> Passing rich with forty pounds a-year.

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Goldsmith dedicated « The Deserted Village » to his friend Sir Joshua Reynolds, from motives of affection. « I can have no expectations, » said the poet, « in an address of this kind, either to add to your reputation, or to establish my own. You can

« When I was in the country, the lower chambers were inhabited by pigs and sheep, and the drawing-rooms by oats. Captain Hogan, however, has, I believe, got it since into his possession, and has, of course, improved its condition.

« Though at first strongly inclined to dispute the identity of Auburn, Lishoy-house overcame my scruples. As I clambered over the rotten gate, and crossed the grass-grown lawn, or court, the tide of association became too strong for casuistry:—here the poet dwelt and wrote, and here his thoughts fondly recurred when composing his 'Traveller,' in a foreign land. Yonder was the decent church, that literally 'topped the neighbouring hill.' Before me lay the little hill of Knockrue, on which he declares, in one of his letters, he had rather sit with a book in hand, than mingle in the proudest assemblies. And, above all, startingly true, beneath my feet was

Yonder copse, where once the garden smiled,
And still where many a garden-flower grows wild.

« A painting from the life could not be more exact. 'The stubborn currant-bush' lifts its head above the rank grass, and the proud hollyhock flaunts where its sisters of the flower-knot are no more.

« In the middle of the village stands the old 'hawthorn-tree,' built up with masonry, to distinguish and preserve it: it is old and stunted, and suffers much from the depredations of post-chaise travellers, who generally stop to procure a twig. Opposite to it is the village ale-house, over the door of which swings 'The Three Jolly Pigeons.' Within, every thing is arranged according to the letter:

The white-wash'd wall, the nicely sanded floor,
The varnish'd clock that click'd behind the door;
The chest contrived a double debt to pay,
A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day;
The pictures placed for ornament and use,
The twelve good rules, the royal game of goose.

« Captain Hogan, I have heard, found great difficulty in obtaining 'the twelve good rules,' but at length purchased them at some London book-stall, to adorn the whitewashed parlour of the 'Three Jolly Pigeons.' However laudable this may be, nothing shook my faith in the reality of Auburn so much as this exactness, which had the disagreeable air of being got up for the occasion. The last object of pilgrimage is the quondam habitation of the schoolmaster,

There, in his noisy mansion, skill'd to rule.

« It is surrounded with fragrant proofs of its identity in

The blossom'd furze, unprofitably gay.

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gain nothing from my admiration, as I am ignorant of that art in which you are said to excel; and I may lose much by the severity of your judgment, as few have a juster taste in poetry than you. Setting interest therefore aside, to which I never paid much attention, I must be indulged at present in following my affections. The only dedication I ever made was to my brother, because I loved him better than most other men. He is since dead. Permit me to inscribe this poem to you.»

The warm friendship which had subsisted for years between the painter and the poet, warranted this dedication; while the fine qualities which distinguished that eminent artist, richly merited

« Here is to be seen the chair of the poet, which fell into the hands of its present possessors at the wreck of the parsonage-house: they have frequently refused large offers of purchase; but more, I dare say, for the sake of drawing contributions from the curious than from any reverence for the bard. The chair is of oak, with back and seat of cane, which precluded all hopes of a secret drawer, like that lately discovered in Gay's. There is no fear of its being worn out by the devout earnestness of sitters—as the cocks and hens have usurped undisputed possession of it, and protest most clamorously against all attempts to get it cleansed, or to seat one's self.

« The controversy concerning the identity of this Auburn was formerly a standing theme of discussion among the learned of the neighbourhood, but since the *pros* and *cons* have been all ascertained, the argument has died away. Its abettors plead the singular agreement between the local history of the place and the Auburn of the poem, and the exactness with which the scenery of the one answers to the description of the other. To this is opposed the mention of the nightingale,

And fill'd each pause the nightingale had made;—

there being no such bird in the island. The objection is slighted, on the other hand, by considering the passage as a mere poetical license: 'Besides,' say they, 'the robin is the Irish nightingale.' And if it be hinted, how unlikely it was that Goldsmith should have laid the scene in a place from which he was and had been so long absent, the rejoinder is always, 'Pray, sir, was Milton in hell when he built Pandemonium?'

« The line is naturally drawn between;—there can be no doubt that the poet intended England by

. . . . . The land to hast'ning ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates and men decay.

« But it is very natural to suppose, that at the same time his imagination had in view the scenes of his youth, which give such strong features of resemblance to the picture.»

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the elegant compliment thus paid him by Goldsmith. « Reynolds,» says Mr Cumberland, « was a perfect gentleman; had good sense, great propriety, with all the social attributes, and all the graces of hospitality, equal to any man. He well knew how to appreciate men of talents, and how near akin the muse of poetry was to that art of which he was so eminent a master. From Goldsmith he caught the subject of his famous Ugolino; what aids he got from others, if he got any, were worthily bestowed and happily applied. Great as an artist, Sir Joshua was equally distinguished as a man; and as few have better deserved, so few have had a more ample share of prosperity dealt out to them. He sunned himself, as it were, in an unclouded sky, and his Muse, that gave him a palette dressed by all the Graces, brought him also a cornucopia rich and full as Flora, Ceres, and Bacchus could conspire to make it. When he was lost to the world,» continues Mr Cumberland, « his death was the dispersion of a bright and luminous circle of ingenious friends, whom the elegance of his manners, the equability of his temper, and the attraction of his talents, had caused to assemble round him as the centre of their society. In all the most engaging graces of his art, in disposition, attitude, employment, character of his figures, and above all, in giving mind and meaning to his portraits, if I were to say Sir Joshua never was excelled, I am inclined to believe so many better opinions would be with me, that I should not be found to have said too much.»

Soon after the publication of « The Deserted Village,» Goldsmith found leisure to accompany a party of ladies on an excursion to Paris. The only memorial which has been preserved of this journey, is the following fragment of a letter addressed to his friend Sir Joshua.

« My dear Friend,—We had a very quick passage from Dover to Calais, which we performed in three hours and twenty minutes, all of us extremely sea-sick, which must necessarily have happened, as my machine to prevent sea-sickness was not completed. We were glad to leave Dover, because we hated to be imposed upon; so were in high spirits at coming to Calais,

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where we were told that a little money would go a great way. Upon landing two little trunks, which was all we carried with us, we were surprised to see fourteen or fifteen fellows, all running down to the ship to lay their hands upon them; four got under each trunk, the rest surrounded, and held the hasps; and in this manner our little baggage was conducted with a kind of funeral solemnity, till it was safely lodged at the custom-house. We were well enough pleased with the people's civility, till they came to be paid. Every creature that had the happiness of but touching our trunks with their finger, expected sixpence; and they had so pretty a civil manner of demanding it, that there was no refusing them. When we had done with the porters, we had next to speak with the custom-house officers, who had their pretty civil way too. We were directed to the Hôtel d'Angleterre, where a *valet de place* came to offer his services; and spoke to me ten minutes before I once found out that he was speaking English. We had no occasion for his services, so we gave him a little money because he spoke English, and because he wanted it. I cannot help mentioning another circumstance; I bought a new ribbon for my wig at Canterbury, and the barber at Calais broke it, in order to gain sixpence by buying me a new one.»

About this period, the Royal Academy of painting was established, and Sir Joshua seized the opportunity it afforded him of testifying his regard and partiality for Goldsmith, by procuring for him the appointment of Professor of Ancient History. Though unattended with either emolument or trouble, it conferred some respectability, and entitled him to a seat at the occasional meetings of the academicians, as well as at their annual dinner. He himself properly considered it a mere complimentary distinction, and from a passage in the following letter to his brother Maurice, it is evident he would have prized his new office much more highly had it been coupled with that unpoetical accompaniment, a salary. Maurice was the poet's youngest brother. Not having been bred to any business, he upon some occasion complained to Oliver, that he found it difficult to live

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like a gentleman. On which the poet begged he would without delay quit so unprofitable a pursuit, and betake himself to a trade. Maurice wisely took the hint, and bound himself apprentice to a cabinet-maker. He had a shop in Dublin when the Duke of Rutland was Lord Lieutenant; and his grace, at the instance of Mr Orde (afterwards Lord Bolton), made him an inspector of the licenses in that city, out of regard for his brother's memory. He was also appointed mace-bearer on the erection of the Royal Irish Academy; both of them places very compatible with his business. In the former, he gave proofs of his integrity, by detecting several frauds in the revenue in his department, by which he himself might have profited, if he had not been a man of principle. He died without issue.

The letter is dated January, 1770.

« DEAR BROTHER,—I should have answered your letter sooner, but in truth I am not fond of thinking of the necessities of those I love, when it is so very little in my power to help them. I am sorry to find you are still every way unprovided for; and what adds to my uneasiness is, that I have received a letter from my sister Johnson,[1] by which I learn that she is pretty much in the same circumstances. As to myself, I believe I could get both you and my poor brother-in-law something like that which you desire, but I am determined never to ask for little things, nor exhaust any little interest I may have, until I can serve you, him, and myself more effectually. As yet, no opportunity has offered, but I believe you are pretty well convinced that I will not be remiss when it arrives. The king has lately been pleased to make me Professor of Ancient History in a Royal Academy of Painting, which he has just established, but there is no salary annexed; and I took it rather as a compliment to the institution, than any benefit to myself. Honours to one in my situation are something like ruffles to a man that wants a shirt. You tell me that there are fourteen or fifteen pounds left me in the hands of my cousin Lawder, and you ask me what I would have done

[1] His youngest sister, who had made an unfortunate marriage.

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with them. My dear brother, I would by no means give any directions to my dear worthy relations at Kilmore how to dispose of money, which is, properly speaking, more theirs than mine. All that I can say is, that I entirely, and this letter will serve to witness, give up any right and title to it; and I am sure they will dispose of it to the best advantage. To them I entirely leave it, whether they or you may think the whole necessary to fit you out, or whether our poor sister Johnson may not want the half, I leave entirely to their and your discretion. The kindness of that good couple to our poor shattered family, demands our sincerest gratitude; and though they have almost forgot me, yet, if good things at last arrive, I hope one day to return, and increase their good-humour by adding to my own. I have sent my cousin Jenny a miniature picture of myself, as I believe it is the most acceptable present I can offer. I have ordered it to be left for her at George Faulkner's, folded in a letter. The face, you well know, is ugly enough, but it is finely painted. I will shortly also send my friends over the Shannon some mezzotinto prints of myself, and some more of my friends here, such as Burke, Johnson, Reynolds, and Colman. I believe I have written a hundred letters to different friends in your country, and never received an answer from any of them. I do not know how to account for this, or why they are unwilling to keep up for me those regards which I must ever retain for them. If then you have a mind to oblige me, you will write often, whether I answer you or not. Let me particularly have the news of our family and old acquaintances. For instance, you may begin by telling me about the family where you reside, how they spend their time, and whether they ever make mention of me. Tell me about my mother, my brother Hodson, and his son, my brother Harry's son and daughter, my sister Johnson, the family of Ballyoughter, what is become of them, where they live, and how they do. You talked of being my only brother; I don't understand you: Where is Charles? A sheet of paper occasionally filled with news of this kind would make me very happy, and would keep you

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nearer my mind. As it is, my dear brother, believe me to be yours most affectionately.»[1]

The lives of Lord Bolingbroke and Dr Parnell, undertaken for the booksellers, were the next productions that came from his pen. They were prefixed to the respective works of these writers, published about 1770 or 1771. Both performances are executed with his wonted taste and felicity of expression; and, in his memoir of Parnell, the poverty of incident peculiar to the life of a scholar is ingeniously supplied by the author's own reflections. When Dr Johnson afterwards undertook to write the «Lives of the Poets,» he concluded the series with that of Parnell, and seized the opportunity it afforded him of paying an elegant compliment to the memory of his deceased friend. «The life of Dr Parnell,» said he, «is a task which I should very willingly decline, since it has lately been written by Goldsmith; a man of such variety of powers, and such felicity of performance, that he always seemed to do best that which he was doing; a man who had the art of being minute without tediousness, and general without confusion; whose language was copious without exuberance, exact without constraint, and easy without weakness.

«What such an author told, who would tell again? I have made an abstract from his larger narration; and have this gratification from my attempt, that it gives me an opportunity of paying due tribute to the memory of Goldsmith.»

Amongst his various undertakings for the booksellers at this period, there was one, however, in which Goldsmith was peculiarly unfortunate. He had been employed by Griffin to make a selection of elegant poems from the best English classics, for the use of boarding-schools, and to prefix to it one of his captivating prefaces. In noting the selections for the printer, Goldsmith unluckily marked off one of the most indecent tales in Prior,—a circumstance that effectually ruined the reputation

[1] To the original of this letter there is annexed a receipt, which shows the sum of 15*l.* was paid to Maurice Goldsmith, for a legacy bequeathed to Oliver Goldsmith by the late Rev. Thomas Contarine, dated 4th February, 1770.

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and the sale of the work at the same time. It has been said, that the error in this instance must have arisen from inadvertency or carelessness; but the inadvertency must have been excessive, as the tale is actually introduced with a criticism.

Goldsmith, when conversing on the subject of his labours at this time as a compiler, used to refer to the «Selection of English Poetry,» as a striking instance of the facility with which such work might sometimes be performed. He remarked «that of all his compilations, this showed most the art of the profession.» To furnish copy for it required no invention, and but little thought: he had only to mark with a pencil the particular passages for the printer, so that he easily acquired two hundred pounds; «but then,» said he, «lest the premium should be deemed more than a compensation for the labour, a man shows his judgment in these selections, and he may be often twenty years of his life cultivating that judgment.»

In 1771, Goldsmith was invited by Mr Bennet Langton and his lady, the Countess of Rothes, to spend some part of the autumn with them at their seat in Lincolnshire. Sir Joshua Reynolds, it would seem, had promised to accompany him on this visit; but, from the following letter to Mr Langton, neither he nor Sir Joshua were able at that time to avail themselves of the invitation. The letter is dated Temple, Brick-court, September 7, 1771.

«My Dear Sir,—Since I had the pleasure of seeing you last, I have been almost wholly in the country at a farmer's house, quite alone, trying to write a comedy. It is now finished; but when, or how it will be acted, or whether it will be acted at all, are questions I cannot resolve. I am therefore so much employed upon that, that I am under the necessity of putting off my intended visit to Lincolnshire for this season.—Reynolds is just returned from Paris, and finds himself now in the case of a truant, that must make up for his idle time by diligence. We have therefore agreed to postpone our journey till next summer, when we hope to have the honour of waiting upon Lady Rothes and you, and staying double the time of our late intended visit. We often meet, and never without remembering you. I see Mr

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Beauclerk very often, both in town and country. He is now going directly forward to become a second Boyle: deep in chemistry and physics. Johnson has been down upon a visit to a country parson, Dr Taylor, and is returned to his old haunts at Mrs Thrale's. Burke is a farmer, *en attendant* a better place; but visiting about too. Every soul is visiting about, and merry, but myself: and that is hard, too, as I have been trying these three months to do something to make people laugh. There have I been strolling about the hedges, studying jests, with a most tragical countenance. The 'Natural History' is about half finished, and I will shortly finish the rest. God knows I am tired of this kind of finishing, which is but bungling work; and that not so much my fault as the fault of my scurvy circumstances. They begin to talk in town of the Opposition's gaining ground; the cry of liberty is still as loud as ever. I have published, or Davies has published for me, 'An Abridgment of the History of England,' for which I have been a good deal abused in the newspapers for betraying the liberties of the people. God knows I had no thought for or against liberty in my head; my whole aim being to make up a book of a decent size, that, as Squire Richard says, 'would do no harm to nobody.' However, they set me down as an arrant Tory, and consequently an honest man. When you come to look at any part of it, you will say that I am a sour Whig. God bless you; and, with my most respectful compliments to her ladyship, I remain, dear sir, your most affectionate humble servant.»

Goldsmith's residence at the farmer's house mentioned in this letter, appears to have been continued for a considerable time. It was situated near to the six-mile stone on the Edgeware-road; and Mr Boswell mentions that he and Mr Mickle, translator of «The Lusiad,» paid him a visit there, in April, 1772. Unfortunately they did not find him at home; but having some curiosity to see his apartment, they went in, and found curious scraps of descriptions of animals scrawled upon the wall, with a black lead pencil. He had carried down his books thither, that he might pursue his labours with less interruption. According to the testimony of a literary friend, who had close intercourse

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with him for the last ten years of his life, the following was his mode of study and living, while in the country. He first read in a morning from the original works requisite for the compilation he had in hand, as much as he designed for one letter or chapter, marking down the passages referred to on a sheet of paper, with remarks. He then rode or walked out with a friend or two, returned to dinner, spent the day generally convivially, without much drinking, to which he was never addicted; and when he retired to his bed-chamber, took up his books and papers with him, where he generally wrote the chapter, or the best part of it, before he went to rest. This latter exercise, he said, cost him very little trouble; for having all his materials duly prepared, he wrote it with as much ease as a common letter. The mode of life and study thus described, Goldsmith, however, only pursued by fits. He loved the gaieties, amusements, and society of London; and amongst these he would occasionally lose himself for months together. To make up for his lost time he would again retire to the farm-house, and there devote himself to his labours with such intense application, that, for weeks successively, he would remain in his apartments without taking exercise. This desultory system is supposed to have injured his health, and to have brought on those fits of the strangury to which he was subject in the latter part of his life. He used to say, that « he believed the farmer's family with whom he lodged thought him an odd character, similar to that in which the *Spectator* appeared to his landlady and her children: he was *The Gentleman*.»

About this period, he was concerned in a work called « The Gentleman's Journal,» published once a fortnight. It was conducted under the joint management of Kenrick, Bickerstaff, and others; but was soon discontinued. When a friend was talking to our author one day on the subject of this work, he concluded his remarks by observing, what an extraordinary sudden death it had. « Not at all, sir,» said Goldsmith; « a very common case; it died of too many doctors.»

His next performance was his second attempt as a dramatist. Not discouraged by the cold reception which his first play had

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met with, he resolved to try his fate with a second, and, maugre a host of adverse critics, succeeded. In his letter to Mr Langton he mentions, that he had been occupied in writing a comedy, « trying these three months to do something to make the people laugh,» and « strolling about the hedges, studying jests, with a most tragical countenance.» This was the drama which he afterwards christened « She Stoops to Conquer; or, The Mistakes of a Night.» Although then just finished, its publication was delayed till it should be acted at one of the theatres; and from the various obstacles and delays which are there thrown in an author's way, it was not produced till March, 1773. Much difference of opinion existed as to the probability of its success. The majority of critics to whom it had been submitted were apprehensive of a total failure; and it was not till after great solicitation, that Mr Colman, the manager of Covent-Garden theatre, consented to put it in rehearsal. That gentleman had himself given incontestable proofs of dramatic genius, in the production of various pieces, and was besides a critic of acknowledged taste and acumen. His reluctance to accept of our author's play, therefore, and his decided condemnation of it at its last rehearsal, was almost considered decisive of its fate. Goldsmith, however, did not despair of it himself; and the opinion of Dr Johnson, without being sanguine, leaned to the favourable side. In a letter to Mr Boswell he says, « Dr Goldsmith has a new comedy, which is expected in the spring. No name is yet given to it. The chief diversion arises from a stratagem, by which a lover is made to mistake his future father-in-law's house for an inn. This, you see, borders upon farce. The dialogue is quick and gay, and the incidents are so prepared as not to seem improbable.» And afterwards, when Colman had actually consented to bring it out, Johnson wrote thus to the Rev. Mr White: « Dr Goldsmith has a new comedy in rehearsal at Covent-Garden, to which the manager predicts ill success. I hope he will be mistaken: I think it deserves a very kind reception.» Others of Goldsmith's friends also entertained favourable opinions of the piece; and a few of them even prophetically anticipated a triumph over the judgment of the ma-

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nager. Perhaps, however, the strong and decided interest taken by these friends in the fate of the play was one great cause of its success. A large party of them, with Johnson at their head, attended to witness the representation, and a scheme to lead the plaudits of the house, which had been preconcerted with much address, was carried into execution with triumphant effect. This contrivance, and the circumstances which led to it are detailed by Mr Cumberland in his Memoirs. «It was now,» says Mr Cumberland, «that I first met him at the British Coffee-house. He dined with us as a visitor, introduced, as I think, by Sir Joshua Reynolds, and we held a consultation upon the naming of his comedy, which some of the company had read, and which he detailed to the rest after his manner with a great deal of good humour. Somebody suggested—*She Stoops to Conquer;* and that title was agreed upon. When I perceived an embarrassment in his manner towards me, which I could readily account for, I lost no time to put him at his ease; and I flatter myself I was successful. As my heart was ever warm towards my contemporaries, I did not counterfeit, but really felt a cordial interest in his behalf; and I had soon the pleasure to perceive, that he credited me for my sincerity.—'You and I,' said he, 'have very different motives for resorting to the stage. I write for money, and care little about fame.'—I was touched by this melancholy confession, and from that moment busied myself assiduously amongst all my connexions in his cause. The whole company pledged themselves to the support of the ingenuous poet, and faithfully kept their promise to him. In fact, he needed all that could be done for him, as Mr Colman, then manager of Covent-Garden theatre, protested against the comedy, when as yet he had not struck upon a name for it. Johnson at length stood forth in all his terrors as champion for the piece, and backed by us, his clients and retainers, demanded a fair trial. Colman again protested; but, with that salvo for his own reputation, liberally lent his stage to one of the most eccentric productions that ever found its way to it; and 'She Stoops to Conquer was put into rehearsal.

«We were not over sanguine of success, but perfectly deter-

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mined to struggle hard for our author: we accordingly assembled our strength at the Shakspeare Tavern in a considerable body for an early dinner, where Samuel Johnson took the chair at the head of a long table, and was the life and soul of the corps: the poet took post silently by his side, with the Burkes, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Fitzherbert, Caleb Whitefoord, and a phalanx of North British predetermined applauders, under the banner of Major Mills, all good men and true. Our illustrious president was in inimitable glee; and poor Goldsmith that day took all his raillery as patiently and complacently as my friend Boswell would have done any day, or every day of his life. In the mean time we did not forget our duty; and though we had a better comedy going, in which Johnson was chief actor, we betook ourselves in good time to our separate and allotted posts, and waited the awful drawing up of the curtain. As our stations were preconcerted, so were our signals for plaudits arranged and determined upon in a manner that gave every one his cue where to look for them, and how to follow them up.

"We had amongst us a very worthy and efficient member, long since lost to his friends and the world at large, Adam Drummond, of amiable memory, who was gifted by nature with the most sonorous, and at the same time the most contagious, laugh that ever echoed from the human lungs. The neighing of the horse of the son of Hystaspes was a whisper to it; the whole thunder of the theatre could not drown it. This kind and ingenuous friend fairly forewarned us, that he knew no more when to give his fire than the cannon did that was planted on a battery. He desired, therefore, to have a flapper at his elbow, and I had the honour to be deputed to that office. I planted him in an upper box, pretty nearly over the stage, in full view of the pit and galleries, and perfectly well situated to give the echo all its play through the hollows and recesses of the theatre. The success of our manœuvres was complete. All eyes were upon Johnson, who sat in a front row of a side-box; and when he laughed, every body thought themselves warranted to roar. In the mean time my friend followed signals with a rattle so irresistibly comic, that, when he had repeated it

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several times, the attention of the spectators was so engrossed by his person and performances, that the progress of the play seemed likely to become a secondary object, and I found it prudent to insinuate to him that he might halt his music without any prejudice to the author; but, alas! it was now too late to rein him in: he had laughed upon my signal where he found no joke, and now unluckily he fancied that he found a joke in almost every thing that was said; so that nothing in nature could be more mal-a-propos than some of his bursts every now and then were. These were dangerous moments, for the pit began to take umbrage; but we carried our point through, and triumphed not only over Colman's judgment but our own.»

The victory thus achieved was a source of infinite exultation to Goldsmith, not more from the pride of success, than from the mortification he imagined it caused to the manager, at whom he was not a little piqued, in consequence of the following circumstance.

On the first night of performance he did not come to the house till towards the close of the representation, having rambled into St James's Park to ruminate on the probable fate of his piece; and such was his anxiety and apprehension, that he was with much difficulty prevailed on to repair to the theatre, on the suggestion of a friend, who pointed out the necessity of his presence, in order to mark any objectionable passages, for the purpose of omission or alteration in the repetition of the performance. With expectation suspended between hope and fear, he had scarcely entered the passage that leads to the stage, when his ears were shocked with a hiss, which came from the audience as a token of their disapprobation of the farcical supposition of Mrs Hardcastle being so deluded as to suppose herself at a distance of fifty miles from home while she was actually not distant fifty yards. Such was our poor author's tremor and agitation on this unwelcome salute, that running up to the manager, he exclaimed, «What's that? what's that?»— «Pshaw, doctor!» replied Colman, in a sarcastic tone, «don't be terrified at *squibs*, when we have been sitting these two hours upon a barrel of *gunpowder*.» The pride of Goldsmith was so

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mortified by this remark, that the friendship which had before subsisted between him and the manager was from that moment dissolved.

The play of « She Stoops to Conquer » is founded upon the incident already related, which befel the author in his younger days, when he mistook a gentleman's house for an inn. Although, from the extravagance of the plot, and drollery of the incidents, we must admit that the piece is very nearly allied to farce, yet the dialogue is carried on in such pure and elegant language, and the strokes of wit and humour are so easy and natural, that few productions of the drama afford more pleasure in the representation. It still keeps possession of the stage as a stock-play, and is frequently acted; a circumstance which proves the accuracy of the opinion expressed by Dr Johnson, « that he knew of no comedy for many years that had so much exhilirated an audience; that had answered so much the great end of comedy—that of making an audience merry.» In publishing this play, Goldsmith paid his friend Johnson the compliment of a dedication, and expressed in the strongest manner the high regard he entertained for him. « By inscribing this slight performance to you,» said he, « I do not mean so much to compliment you as myself. It may do me some honour to inform the public, that I have lived many years in intimacy with you. It may serve the interests of mankind also to inform them, that the greatest wit may be found in a character without impairing the most unaffected piety.»

The good fortune which attended this drama was productive of its usual concomitants—a mixed portion of applause and censure, with instances of fulsome flattery and furious detraction. While from less fortunate bards, whose poverty induced them to solicit his bounty, he received the incense of adulation in a torrent of congratulatory addresses; from others, more independent, who were jealous of his reputation, and envied his success, he experienced all the virulence of malignant criticism and scurrilous invective. A single instance of each may gratify the curiosity of our readers.

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« ON DR GOLDSMITH'S COMEDY

'SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER.'

« Quite sick in her bed Thalia was laid,
A sentiment puke had quite kill'd the sweet maid,
Her bright eyes lost all of their fire;
When a regular doctor, one Goldsmith by name,
Found out her disorder as soon as he came,
And has made her (for ever 'twill crown all his fame)
As lively as one can desire.

« Oh! doctor, assist a poor bard who lies ill,
Without e'er a nurse, e'er a potion, or pill;
From your kindness he hopes for some ease.
You're a 'good-natured man' all the world does allow,
O would your good-nature but shine forth just now,
In a manner—I'm sure your good sense will tell how,
Your servant most humbly 'twould please!

« The bearer is the author's wife, and an answer from Dr Goldsmith by her, will be ever gratefully acknowledged by his humble servant,

« JOHN OAKMAN.»

« Saturday, March 27, 1773.»

The other instance exhibits an attempt to check the author's triumph on the ninth night after the representation of his play. It was a most illiberal personal attack, in the form of a letter (supposed to be written by Dr Kenrick), addressed to Goldsmith himself, and inserted in « The London Packet» of the 24th March, 1773, published by Mr Thomas Evans, bookseller in Paternoster-row. Both the manner and the matter are unworthy of Kenrick, who was a man of talents. It was probably the work of a more obscure hand.

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« FOR THE LONDON PACKET.

« TO DR GOLDSMITH.

« *Vous vous noyez par vanité.*

« SIR,—The happy knack which you have learnt of puffing your own compositions, provokes me to come forth. You have not been the editor of newspapers and magazines, not to discover the trick of literary *humbug:* but the gauze is so thin, that the very foolish part of the world see through it, and discover the doctor's monkey face, and cloven foot. Your poetic vanity is as unpardonable as your personal. Would man believe it, and will woman bear it, to be told, that for hours the *great* Goldsmith will stand surveying his grotesque orang-outang's figure in a pier glass? Was but the lovely H——k as much enamoured, you would not sigh, my gentle swain, in vain. But your vanity is preposterous. How will this same bard of Bedlam ring the changes in the praise of Goldy! But what has he to be either proud or vain of? 'The Traveller' is a flimsy poem, built upon false principles—principles diametrically opposite to liberty. What is 'The Good-natured Man' but a poor, water-gruel, dramatic dose? What is 'The Deserted Village' but a pretty poem, of easy numbers, without fancy, dignity, genius, or fire? And, pray, what may be the last *speaking pantomime*, so praised by the doctor himself, but an incoherent piece of stuff, the figure of a woman with a fish's tail, without plot, incident, or intrigue? We are made to laugh at stale dull jokes, wherein we mistake pleasantry for wit, and grimace for humour; wherein every scene is unnatural, and inconsistent with the rules, the laws of nature, and of the drama: viz. two gentlemen come to a man of fortune's house, eat, drink, etc. and take it for an inn. The one is intended as a lover for the daughter: he talks with her for some hours; and when he sees her again in a different dress, he treats her as a bar-girl, and swears she squinted. He abuses the master of the house, and threatens to kick him

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out of his own doors. The 'squire, whom we are told is to be a fool, proves the most sensible being of the piece; and he makes out a whole act, by bidding his mother lie close behind a bush, persuading her that his father, her own husband, is a highwayman, and that he has come to cut their throats; and, to give his cousin an opportunity to go off, he drives his mother over hedges, ditches, and through ponds. There is not, sweet sucking Johnson, a natural stroke in the whole play, but the young fellow's giving the stolen jewels to the mother, supposing her to be the landlady. That Mr Colman did no justice to this piece, I honestly allow; that he told all his friends it would be damned, I positively aver; and, from such ungenerous insinuations, without a dramatic merit, it rose to public notice; and it is now the *ton* to go and see it, though I never saw a person that either liked it, or approved it, any more than the absurd plot of Home's tragedy of 'Alonzo.' Mr Goldsmith, correct your arrogance, reduce your vanity, and endeavour to believe, as a man, you are of the plainest sort; and, as an author, but a mortal piece of mediocrity.

« *Brise le miroir infidèle,*
« *Qui vous cache la vérité.*

« Tom Tickle.»

Indignant at the wanton scurrility of this letter, which was pointed out to him by the officious kindness of a friend, and enraged at the indelicacy of introducing the name of a lady with whom he was acquainted, Goldsmith, accompanied by one of his countrymen, waited on Mr Evans, and remonstrated with him on the malignity and cruelty of such an unmerited attack upon private character. After arguing upon the subject, Evans, who had really no concern in the paper, except as publisher, went to examine the file; and, while stooping down for it, the author was rashly advised by his friend to take that opportunity of using his cane, which he immediately proceeded to do, and applied it to the publisher's shoulders. The latter, however, unexpectedly made a powerful resistance, and, being a stout, high-blooded Welshman, very soon returned the blows

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with interest. Perceiving the turn that matters were taking, Goldsmith's hot-headed friend fled out of the shop, leaving him in a sad plight, and nearly overpowered by the fierce Welshman. In the mean time, Dr Kenrick, who happened to be in a private room of the publisher's, came forward on hearing the noise, and interposed between the combatants, so as to put an end to the fight. The author, sorely bruised and battered, was then conveyed to a coach; and Kenrick, though suspected to be the writer of the libel, affecting great compassion for his condition, conducted him home. This ridiculous quarrel afforded considerable sport for the newspapers before it was finally made up. An action was threatened by Evans for the assault, but it was at length compromised. Many paragraphs appeared, however, reflecting severely on the impropriety of Goldsmith's attempting to beat a person in his own house; and to these he conceived it incumbent on him to make a reply. Accordingly, the following justificatory address appeared in «The Daily Advertiser» of Wednesday, March 31, 1773.

«TO THE PUBLIC.

«Lest it may be supposed, that I have been willing to correct in others an abuse of which I have been guilty myself, I beg leave to declare, that in all my life I never wrote or dictated a single paragraph, letter, or essay in a newspaper, except a few moral essays, under the character of a Chinese, about ten years ago, in the 'Ledger;' and a letter, to which I signed my name, in the 'St James's Chronicle.' If the liberty of the press, therefore, has been abused, I have had no hand in it.

«I have always considered the press as the protector of our freedom—as a watchful guardian, capable of uniting the weak against the encroachments of power. What concerns the public most properly admits of a public discussion. But, of late, the press has turned from defending public interest to making inroads upon private life; from combating the strong to overwhelming the feeble. No condition is now too obscure for its abuse; and the protector is become the tyrant of the people.

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In this manner, the freedom of the press is beginning to sow the seeds of its own dissolution: the great must oppose it from principle, and the weak from fear; till at last every rank of mankind shall be found to give up its benefits, content with security from its insults.

«How to put a stop to this licentiousness, by which all are indiscriminately abused, and by which vice consequently escapes in the general censure, I am unable to tell. All I could wish is, that as the law gives us no protection against the injury, so it should give calumniators no shelter after having provoked correction. The insults which we receive before the public, by being more open, are the more distressing. By treating them with silent contempt, we do not pay a sufficient deference to the opinion of the world. By recurring to legal redress, we too often expose the weakness of the law, which only serves to increase our mortification by failing to relieve us. In short, every man should singly consider himself as a guardian of the liberty of the press; and, as far as his influence can extend, should endeavour to prevent its licentiousness becoming at last the grave of its freedom.

«OLIVER GOLDSMITH.»

The composition of this address is so much in the style of Dr Johnson, that it was at first generally believed to be the production of his pen. Johnson, however, always disclaimed any participation in it; and his disavowal has since been recorded in the volumes of Mr Boswell. «On Saturday, April 3,» says that gentleman, «the day after my arrival in London this year, I went to his (Dr Johnson's) house late in the evening, and sat with Mrs Williams till he came home. I found, in the 'London Chronicle,' Dr Goldsmith's apology to the public for beating Evans, a bookseller, on account of a paragraph in a newspaper published by him, which Goldsmith thought impertinent to him and to a lady of his acquaintance. The apology was written so much in Dr Johnson's manner, that both Mrs Williams and I supposed it to be his; but when he came home he soon undeceived us. When he said to Mrs Williams, 'Well, Dr Gold-

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smith's *manifesto* has got into your paper,' I asked him if Dr Goldsmith had written it, with an air that made him see I suspected it was his, though subscribed by Goldsmith.—Johnson; 'Sir, Dr Goldsmith would no more have asked me to write such a thing as that for him, than he would have asked me to feed him with a spoon, or to do any thing else that denoted his imbecility. I as much believe that he wrote it, as if I had seen him do it. Sir, had he shown it to any one friend, he would not have been allowed to publish it. He has, indeed, done it very well; but it is a foolish thing well done. I suppose he has been so much elated with the success of his new comedy, that he has thought every thing that concerned him must be of importance to the public.' Boswell; 'I fancy, sir, this is the first time that he has been engaged in such an adventure.' Johnson; 'Why, sir, I believe it is the first time he has *beat;* he may have *been beaten* before. This, sir, is a new plume to him.'»

Had it not been for the painful and ludicrous circumstances attending this unlucky squabble, Goldsmith, in all probability, would have felt more than sufficiently elated with the success of his new comedy. Independent of the literary triumph it afforded him over the judgments of Colman and others as critics, the pecuniary advantages he reaped from it were equally satisfactory. He cleared, by this performance alone, upwards of eight hundred pounds. Indeed, the emolument which at this period Goldsmith derived from his various productions was considerable. In less than two years, it is computed that he realised not less than eighteen hundred pounds. This comprises the profits of both his comedies, various sums received on account of his «Animated Nature,» which was still in progress, and the copy-money of his lives of Bolingbroke and Parnell. Nevertheless, within little more than a year after the receipt of these sums, his circumstances were by no means in a prosperous condition. The profuse liberality with which he assisted indigent authors was one of the causes which led to such a state of things. Purdon, Pilkington, Hiffernan, and others, but particularly some of his own countrymen, hung perpetually about him, played upon his credulity, and, under pretence of borrow-

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ing, literally robbed him of his money. Though duped again and again by some of these artful men, he never could steel his heart against their applications. A story of distress always awakened his sensibility, and emptied his purse. But what contributed more than any other cause to exhaust his means and embarrass his affairs, was the return of his passion for gaming. The command of money had unfortunately drawn him again into that pernicious habit, and he became the easy prey of the more knowing and experienced in the art. Notwithstanding the amount of his receipts, therefore, poor Goldsmith, from the goodness of his heart, and his indiscretion at play, instead of being able to look forward to affluence, was involved in all the perplexities of debt.

It is remarkable that about this time he attempted to discard the ordinary address by which he had been long recognized; rejecting the title of Doctor, and assuming that of plain Mr Goldsmith. The motives that induced this innovation have never been properly explained. Some have supposed that it was owing to a resolution never more to engage as a practical professor in the healing art; while others have imagined that it was prompted by his dislike to the constraint imposed by the grave deportment necessary to support the appellation and character of Doctor, or perhaps from ambition to be thought a man of fashion rather than a mere man of letters. Whatever were the motives, he found it impossible to throw off a designation by which he had been so long and generally known; the world continued to call him Doctor (though he was only Bachelor of Medicine) till the day of his death, and posterity has perpetuated the title.

«The History of the Earth and Animated Nature,» on which he had been engaged about four years, at length made its appearance in the beginning of 1774, and finally closed the literary labours of Goldsmith. During the progress of this undertaking, he is said to have received from the publisher eight hundred and fifty pounds of copy-money. Its character, as a work of literature and science, we have already noticed.

The unfinished poem of «Retaliation,» the only performance

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that remains to be noticed, owed its birth to some circumstances of festive merriment that occurred at one of the meetings in St James's Coffee-house. The occasion that produced it is thus adverted to by Mr Cumberland in his Memoirs: «It was upon a proposal started by Edmund Burke, that a party of friends, who had dined together at Sir Joshua Reynolds' and my house, should meet at the St James's Coffee-house; which accordingly took place, and was occasionally repeated with much festivity and good fellowship. Dr Barnard, dean of Derry, a very amiable and old friend of mine, Dr Douglas, since bishop of Salisbury Johnson, David Garrick, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Oliver Goldsmith' Edmund and Richard Burke, Hickey, with two or three others,' constituted our party. At one of these meetings, an idea was suggested of extemporary epitaphs upon the parties present; pen and ink were called for, and Garrick off-hand wrote an epitaph with a good deal of humour upon poor Goldsmith, who was the first in jest, as he proved to be in reality, that we committed to the grave. The dean also gave him an epitaph, and Sir Joshua illuminated the dean's verses with a sketch of his bust in pen and ink, inimitably caricatured. Neither Johnson nor Burke wrote any thing; and when I perceived Oliver was rather sore, and seemed to watch me with that kind of attention which indicated his expectation of something in the same kind of burlesque with theirs, I thought it time to press the joke no farther, and wrote a few couplets at a side-table; which, when I had finished, and was called upon by the company to exhibit, Goldsmith, with much agitation, besought me to spare him; and I was about to tear them, when Johnson wrested them out of my hand, and in a loud voice read them at the table. I have now lost all recollection of them, and in fact they were little worth remembering; but as they were serious and complimentary, the effect they had upon Goldsmith was the more pleasing for being so entirely unexpected. The concluding line, which is the only one I can call to mind, was—

All mourn the poet, I lament the man.'

This I recollect, because he repeated it several times, and seemed

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much gratified by it. At our next meeting, he produced his epitaphs as they stand in the little posthumous poem above mentioned; and this was the last time he ever enjoyed the company of his friends.»

The delicacy with which Mr Cumberland acted on this occasion, and the compliment he paid to our author, were not thrown away. In drawing the character of Cumberland in return, Goldsmith, while he demonstrated his judgment as a critic, proved his gratitude and friendship at the same time, in designating him,

«The Terence of England, the mender of hearts.»

Other members of the club, however, were hit off with a much smaller portion of compliment, and for the most part with more truth than flattery; yet the wit and humour with which he discriminated their various shades of character, is happily free from the slightest tincture of ill-nature. His epitaph on Mr Burke proves him to have been intimately acquainted with the disposition and qualities of that celebrated orator. The characteristics of Mr Burke's brother are humorously delineated, and were highly appropriate; the portrait of Dr Douglas is critically true; but the most masterly sketch in the piece is undoubtedly the character of Garrick, who had been peculiarly severe in his epitaph on Goldsmith.[1]

On the evening that Goldsmith produced «Retaliation» he read it in full club, and the members were afterwards called on for their opinions. *Some* expatiated largely in its praise, and others *seemed* to be delighted with it; yet, when its publication was suggested, the prevailing sentiment was decidedly hostile to such a measure. Goldsmith hence discovered, that a little sprinkling of fear was not an unnecessary ingredient in the friendship of the world; and though he meant not immediately to publish his poem, he determined to keep it, as he expressed himself to a friend, «as a rod in pickle for any future occasion

[1] See Vol. II. p. 98.

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that might occur.» But this occasion never presented itself: a more awful period was now approaching.

A short time previous to this, he had projected an important literary work, under the title of « A Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences.» In this undertaking he is said to have engaged all his literary friends, including most of the members of the Literary Club, particularly Johnson, Reynolds, and Burke, who promised to promote the design with all their interest, and to furnish him with original articles on various subjects to be embraced by the work. So much had he this project at heart,—so sanguine was he of its success,—and so little doubt did he entertain of encouragement from the booksellers, that without previous concert with any one of the trade, he actually printed and published the *Prospectus* at his own expense. These gentlemen, however, were not, at that time, disposed to enter upon so heavy an undertaking, and of course received his proposals so coldly, that he found himself obliged to abandon the design. It is supposed that he had fondly promised himself relief from his pecuniary difficulties by this scheme, and consequently his chagrin at the disappointment was the more keenly felt. He frequently lamented the circumstance to his friends; and there is little doubt that it contributed, with other vexations, to aggravate the disease which ended in his dissolution.

Goldsmith had been, for some years, occasionally afflicted with a strangury. The attacks of this disease had latterly become more frequent and violent; and these, combined with anxiety of mind on the subject of his accumulating debts, embittered his days, and brought on almost habitual despondency. While in this unhappy condition, he was attacked by a nervous fever in the spring of 1774.

On Friday, the 25th of March, that year, finding himself extremely ill, he sent at eleven o'clock at night for Mr Hawes, an apothecary, to whom he complained of a violent pain extending all over the fore-part of his head; his tongue was moist, he had a cold shivering, and his pulse beat about ninety strokes in a minute. He said he had taken two ounces of ipecacuanha wine as a vomit, and that it was his intention to take Dr James's

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fever powders, which he desired might be sent him. Mr Hawes replied, that in his opinion this medicine was very improper at *that* time, and begged he would not think of it; but every argument used seemed only to render him more determined in his own opinion.

Mr Hawes knowing that on former occasions Goldsmith had always consulted Dr Fordyce, and that he entertained the highest opinion of his abilities as a physician, requested permission to send for him. To this, with great reluctance, he gave consent, as the taking of Dr James's powders appeared to be the only object that employed his attention; and even after he had given his consent, he endeavoured to throw an obstacle in the way, by saying, that Dr Fordyce was gone to spend the evening in Gerrard-street, «where,» added he, «I should also have been myself, if I had not been indisposed.» Mr Hawes immediately dispatched a messenger for Dr Fordyce, whom he found at home, and who instantly waited upon Goldsmith.

Dr Fordyce, on perceiving the symptoms of the disease, was of the same opinion with Mr Hawes respecting Dr James's powders; and strongly represented to the patient the impropriety of his taking that medicine in his *present* situation. Unhappily, however, he was deaf to all remonstrances, and persevered in his own resolution.

On the following morning Mr Hawes visited his patient, and found him very much reduced; his voice feeble, and his pulse very quick and small. When he inquired of him how he did, Goldsmith sighed deeply, and in a very low and languid tone said, «he wished he had taken his friendly advice last night.»

Dr Fordyce arrived soon after Mr Hawes, and saw with alarm the danger of their patient's situation. He therefore proposed to send for Dr Turton, of whose talents and skill he knew Goldsmith had a great opinion: to this proposal the patient readily consented, and ordered his servant to go directly. Doctors Fordyce and Turton accordingly met at the time appointed, and had a consultation. This they continued twice a-day till the 4th of April, 1774, when the disorder terminated in the death of the poet, in the forty-fifth year of his age.

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Goldsmith's sudden and unexpected dissolution created a general feeling of regret among the literary circles of that period. The newspapers and periodical publications teemed with tributary verses to his memory; and perhaps no poet was ever more lamented in every possible variety of sonnet, elegy, epitaph, and dirge. Mr Woty's lines on the occasion we select from the general mass of eulogy.

"Adieu, sweet bard! to each fine feeling true,
Thy virtues many, and thy foibles few;
Those form'd to charm e'en vicious minds—and these
With harmless mirth the social soul to please.
Another's woe thy heart could always melt;
None gave more free,—for none more deeply felt.
Sweet bard, adieu! thy own harmonious lays
Have sculptured out thy monument of praise;
Yes,—these survive to time's remotest day,
While drops the bust, and boastful tombs decay.
Reader, if number'd in the Muses' train,
Go, tune the lyre, and imitate his strain;
But, if no poet thou, reverse the plan,
Depart in peace, and imitate the man."

"Of poor Dr Goldsmith," said Johnson, in answer to a query of Boswell's, "there is little to be told more than the papers have made public. He died of a fever, made, I am afraid, more violent by uneasiness of mind. His debts began to be heavy, and all his resources were exhausted. Sir Joshua is of opinion, that he owed no less than two thousand pounds.[1] Was ever poet so trusted before?"

The extraordinary sum thus owing by Goldsmith excited general surprise after his death, and gave rise to some ill-natured and injurious reflections. To those, however, who were intimately acquainted with his careless disposition and habits, the wonder was not, that he should be so much in debt, but, as Johnson remarks, that he should have been so much trusted. He was so liberal in his donations, and profuse in his general

[1] 4000*l.*—*Campbell's Biography of Goldsmith.*

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disbursements; so unsettled in his mode of living, and imprudent in gaming; and altogether so little accustomed to regulate his expenses by any system of economy, that at last his debts greatly exceeded his resources; and their accumulation towards the close of his life was by no means matter of astonishment. These debts, however, consisted chiefly of sums that he had taken up in advance, from the managers of the two theatres, for comedies which he had engaged to furnish to each; and from the booksellers for publications which he was to finish for the press;—all which engagements he fully intended, and would probably have been able to fulfil, as he had done on former occasions in similar exigencies; but his premature death unhappily prevented the execution of his plans.

The friends of Goldsmith, literary as well as personal, were exceedingly numerous, and so attached to his memory, that they determined to honour his remains with a public funeral, and to bury him in Westminster Abbey. His pall was to have been supported by Lord Shelburne, Lord Louth, Sir Joshua Reynolds, the Hon. Mr Beauclerk, Mr Edmund Burke, and Mr Garrick. Some circumstances, which have never been explained, occurred to prevent this resolution from being carried into effect. It is generally believed that the chief reason was a feeling of delicacy, suggested by the disclosure of his embarrassed affairs, and the extraordinary amount of his debts. He was, therefore, privately interred in the Temple burying-ground, a few select friends paying the last sad offices to his remains. A short time afterwards, however, the members of the Literary Club suggested, and zealously promoted, a subscription to defray the expense of a monument to his memory. The necessary funds were soon realized, and the chisel of Nollekens was employed to do honour to the poet. The design and workmanship of this memorial were purposely simple and inexpensive. It was erected in Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey, between the monument of Gay and that of the Duke of Argyll. On this occasion, the statuary is admitted to have produced a good likeness of the person commemorated. The bust of Goldsmith is exhibited in a large medallion, embellished with literary ornaments, underneath which

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is a tablet of white marble, with the following Latin inscription by Dr Johnson.

OLIVARII GOLDSMITH,
Poetæ, Physici, Historici,
Qui nullum ferè scribendi genus
non tetigit,
Nullum quod tetigit non ornavit:
Sive risus essent movendi,
Sive lacrymæ,
Affectuum potens at lenis dominator:
Ingenio sublimis, vividus, versatilis,
Oratione grandis, nitidus, venustus:
Hoc monumento memoriam coluit
Sodalium amor,
Amicorum fides,
Lectorum veneratio.
Natus in Hibernià Forniæ Longfordiensis,
In loco cui nomen Pallas,
Nov. xxix. MDCCXXXI.
Eblanæ literis institutus.
Obiit Londini,
April. iv. MDCCLXXIV.[1]

[1] This Latin inscription having been undertaken at the suggestion of a meeting which took place in the house of Mr Cumberland, when some members of the Literary Club were present, Johnson, either out of deference to them, or from the carelessness and modesty which characterised him as to his own writings, submitted the composition to the revisal of Sir Joshua Reynolds, with a request to show it afterwards to the Club for their approval. « I have been kept away from you, » says he, in a card to Sir Joshua, « I know not well how; and of these vexatious hindrances I know not when there will be an end. I therefore send you the poor dear Doctor's epitaph. Read it first yourself; and, if you then think it right, show it to the Club. I am, you know, willing to be corrected. If you think any thing much amiss, keep it to yourself till we come together. » The epitaph was accordingly laid before the Club soon afterwards, and though no alteration was made, yet it gave rise to a great deal of discussion, and was productive of a curious literary *jeu d'esprit*, not only singular in itself, but remarkable for the celebrated names connected with it.

« This *jeu d'esprit*, » says Sir William Forbes, in a letter to Mr Boswell, « took its rise one day at dinner at our friend Sir Joshua Reynolds's. All the company present, except myself, were friends and acquaintance of Dr Goldsmith. The epitaph, written for him by Dr Johnson, became the subject of conversation, and various emendations were suggested, which it was agreed should be submitted to the Doctor's considera-

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In addition to this eulogium on the literary qualities of his friend, Johnson afterwards honoured his memory with the following tetrastick in Greek.

Τὸν τάφον εἰσοράας τοῦ Ολιβαρίοιο, κονίην
Ἄφροσι μὴ σεμνὴν, Ξεῖνε, πόδεσσι πάτει
Οἷσι μέμηλε φύσις μίτρων χάρις, ἔργα παλαιῶν
Κλαίετε ποιήτην, ἱστόρικον, φύσικον.

"Thou beholdest the tomb of OLIVER! press not, O stranger, with the foot of folly, the venerable dust. Ye who care for nature, for the charms of song, for the deeds of ancient days, weep for the historian, the naturalist, the poet."

The general cast of Goldsmith's figure and physiognomy was not engaging, and the impression made by his writings, on the mind of a stranger, was not confirmed by the external graces of

tion. But the question was, Who should have the courage to propose them to him? At last it was hinted, that there could be no way so good as that of a *Round Robin*, as the sailors call it, which they make use of when they enter into a conspiracy, so as not to let it be known who puts his name first or last to the paper. This proposition was instantly assented to; and Dr Barnard, dean of Derry, now bishop of Killaloe, drew up an address to Dr Johnson on the occasion, replete with wit and humour, but which, it was feared, the Doctor might think treated the subject with too much levity. Mr Burke then proposed the address as it stands in the paper in writing [the paper was enclosed], to which I had the honour to officiate as clerk.

"Sir Joshua agreed to carry it to Dr Johnson, who received it with much good-humour, and desired Sir Joshua to tell the gentlemen that he would alter the epitaph in any manner they pleased, as to the sense of it; but *he would never consent to disgrace the walls of Westminster Abbey with an English inscription.* I consider this *Round Robin*," continues Sir William, "as a species of literary curiosity worth preserving, as it marks, in a certain degree, Dr Johnson's character." The following transcript of it, as given by Mr Boswell, may gratify such of our readers as are curious in literary anecdote:

We, the circumscribers, having read with great pleasure an intended epitaph for the monument of Dr Goldsmith, which, considered abstractedly, appears to be, for elegant composition and masterly style, in every respect worthy of the pen of its learned author, are yet of opinion, that the character of the deceased, as a writer, particularly as a poet, is perhaps not delineated with all the exactness which Dr Johnson is capable of giving it. We, therefore, with deference to his superiour judgment, humbly request that he would at least take the trouble of revising it, and of making such additions and alterations as he shall think pro-

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their author. In stature he was somewhat under the middle size; his body was strongly built, and his limbs, as one of his biographers expresses it, were more sturdy than elegant. His forehead was low, and more prominent than is usual; his complexion pallid; his face almost round, and pitted with the small-pox. His first appearance was therefore by no means captivating: yet the general lineaments of his countenance bore the stamp of intellect, and exhibited traces of deep thinking; and, when he grew easy and cheerful in company, he relaxed

per, upon a further perusal. But if we might venture to express our wishes, they would lead us to request, that he would write the epitaph in English, rather than in Latin; as we think that the memory of so eminent an English writer ought to be perpetuated in the language to which his works are likely to be so lasting an ornament, which we also know to have been the opinion of the late Doctor himself.

The circumscribers to this curious remonstrance, agreeably to their respective signatures, were as follows: viz.—Edm. Burke, Tho. Franklin, Ant. Chamier, G. Colman, Wm Vackell, J. Reynolds, W. Forbes, T. Barnard, R. B. Sheridan, P. Metcalfe, E. Gibbon, Jos. Warton. This hasty composition, as remarked by Mr Boswell, is one of the thousand instances which evince the extraordinary promptitude of Mr Burke, who, while he was equal to the greatest things, could adorn the least; could with equal facility embrace the vast and complicated speculations of politics, or the ingenious topics of literary investigation. It is also an eminent proof of the reverence with which Johnson was regarded by some of the ablest men of his time, in various departments, and even by such of them as lived most with him.

Although Johnson was in great good-humour with the production as a *jeu d'esprit*, yet, on seeing Dr Warton's name to the suggestion that the epitaph should be in English, he observed to Sir Joshua, « I wonder that Joe Warton, a scholar by profession, should be such a fool. » He said too, « I should have thought Mund Burke would have had more sense. » Mr Langton, who was one of the company at Sir Joshua's, like a sturdy scholar, resolutely refused to sign the *Round Robin*. On another occasion, when somebody endeavoured to argue in favour of its being in English, Johnson said, « The language of the country of which a learned man was a native, is not the language fit for his epitaph, which should be in ancient and permanent language. Consider, sir, how you should feel, were you to find at Rotterdam an epitaph upon Erasmus *in Dutch!* » Perhaps on this subject Mr Boswell's suggestion is the best. « For my part, » says he, « I think it would be proper to have epitaphs written both in a learned language and in the language of the country, so that they might have the advantage of being more universally understood, and, at the same time, be secured of classical stability. »

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into such a display of benevolent good-humour, as soon removed every unfavourable impression. His pleasantry in company, however, sometimes degenerated into buffoonery; and this circumstance, coupled with the inelegance of his person and deportment, often prevented him from appearing to so much advantage as might have been expected from his learning and genius.

The aptitude of Goldsmith to blunder in conversation has excited considerable surprise when contrasted with his powers as a writer. His literary associates used to be struck with the disparity, and some of them puzzled themselves to account for it. Sir Joshua Reynolds once mentioned that he had frequently heard Goldsmith talk warmly of the pleasure of being liked, and observe how hard it would be if literary excellence should preclude a man from that satisfaction, which he perceived it often did, from the envy that attended it. «I am, therefore, convinced,» said Sir Joshua, «that he was often intentionally absurd in conversation, in order to lessen himself in social intercourse, trusting that his character would be sufficiently supported by his works.» But this appears to be the excess of refinement in conjecture; and Mr Boswell's reason, which ascribed it to Goldsmith's «vanity, and an eager desire to be conspicuous wherever he was,» though less charitable, is more consistent with probability. The truth, however, may have been, that Goldsmith, having constantly before him the example of extraordinary conversational abilities in Johnson, either from the spirit of competition, or the ambition to excel in such a fascinating talent, was tempted to a frequent display of his own powers in the same line. Our excessive anxiety to do any thing well, often defeats the end we have in view; and it is not unlikely that, on such occasions, this was the fate of Goldsmith. Yet, notwithstanding all his mistakes, he had gleams of eloquence; and, although Mr Boswell studies to make him a foil to Johnson, there are instances among the conversations reported by that gentleman, where Goldsmith shines as the most rational and elegant interlocutor of the whole. Hence it is reasonable to conclude, that the accounts which have been transmitted of the

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weakness or absurdity of Goldsmith's conversation are greatly overcharged. Be that as it may, if the conversation of Goldsmith was so confused and inaccurate as has been generally reported, it is an eminent instance, among many others, in which the conversation of literary men has been found strikingly unequal to their works. It forms also an illustration of the observation of Cicero, that it is very possible for a man to think rightly, and yet want the power of conveying his sentiments in becoming language: « *Fieri potest ut recte quis sentiat, sed id quod sentit polite eloqui non possit.*» Perhaps the chief fault of Goldsmith in conversation, as has been remarked by one of his biographers, lay in his being always overhurried; so that he was too apt to speak without reflection, and without a sufficient knowledge of the subject. He himself humorously used to remark, that he always argued best when he argued alone. The same circumstance was noticed by Johnson, and gave rise to the observation, « that no man was more foolish when he had not a pen in his hand, or more wise when he had.»

If it must be admitted that Goldsmith had no talent for oral display, it will not be disputed that in the solitude of the closet, « when he argued alone,» he was almost unrivalled. A celebrated critic remarked of him, that « whatever he composed, he did it better than any other man could.» It has been objected to the moral essays of Goldsmith, that they present life under a gloomy aspect, and leave an impression of despondency on the mind of the reader. Whether to paint life as it is, be a fault in a writer, is a question that will admit of considerable dispute; but it will not be denied, that when he pictures the woes and vanities of existence, he only repeats the lessons of experience. It ought also to be recollected that an author's writings are generally a transcript of his own feelings. If the moral productions of Goldsmith are sometimes gloomy and despondent, we should take into account the circumstances under which they were written:—when he was obscure and friendless, oppressed with want, sick of the past, and almost despairing of the future. The language of his prose works, in general, is admitted to be a model of perfection. His very enemies used to acknowledge the su-

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periority of his taste in composition, and the unrivalled excellence of his style. It was not without reason, therefore, that Johnson at one time exclaimed, « Where is there now a man who can pen an essay with such ease and elegance as Goldsmith?»

In poetry Goldsmith confessedly shines with great lustre. But, viewing him as a scholar, it is surprising how little of his imagery is drawn from reminiscences of the classics. His verses are utterly void of the machinery of ancient polytheism, and scarcely a single mythological personage is ever invoked by him. In truth, he seems to have had no partiality for the family of gods, goddesses, and demi-gods, and to have discarded as useless the whole race of fauns, satyrs, dryads, and hamadryads. He is one of those who seek to please chiefly by an exhibition of nature in her simplest and most familiar views. From these he selects his objects with equal taste and discretion; and in no instance does he ever represent what would excite disgust, or cause pain. In the poetry of Goldsmith there is nothing that strikes us as merely ideal. Every thing is clear, distinct, and palpable. His very imagery is tangible. He draws it from objects that act at once upon the senses, and the reader is never for a moment at a loss to discover its application. It is this that makes Goldsmith so easily understood, and so generally admired. His poetical landscapes and portraits are so many transcripts from living nature; while every image, every thought, and every sentiment connected with them, have a corresponding expression of unaffected truth and simplicity. It was said of him by Mr Boswell, that « his mind resembled a fertile but thin soil; there was a quick, but not a strong vegetation of whatever chanced to be thrown upon it. No deep root could be struck. The oak of the forest did not grow there; but the elegant shrubbery, and the fragrant parterre, appeared in gay succession.» This is a poetical description, and, with some limitation, may be admitted as an approach to the truth. The characteristics of Goldsmith's poetry are ease, softness, and beauty. He can be commended for the elegance of his imagery, the depth of his pathos, and the flow of his numbers. He is uniformly tender and impressive, but rarely sublime. The commendation which he himself has be-

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stowed on the poetry of Parnell may justly be applied to his own. «At the end of his course,» says he, «the reader regrets that his way has been so short; he wonders that it gave him so little trouble; and so resolves to go the journey over again.» A similar impression, or something analogous to it, is felt by every reader of the poetry of Goldsmith. His course has been through a rich and highly cultivated country, where sweet fruits and fragrant flowers regaled his senses at every step; where every object that he passed was blooming in beauty, and pregnant with interest; and where he himself never for a moment felt any intermission of enjoyment.

From the characteristics of the poet we turn to the qualities of the man. Goldsmith was mild and gentle in his manners, warm in his friendships, and active in his charity and benevolence. So strongly did he use to be affected by compassion, that he has been known at midnight to abandon his rest in order to procure relief and an asylum for a poor dying object who was left destitute in the streets. The humanity of his disposition was manifested on every occasion that called for its exercise; and so large was his liberality, that his last guinea was the general boundary of his munificence. He had two or three poor authors always as pensioners, besides several widows and poor housekeepers; and when he happened to have no money to give the latter, he sent them away with shirts or old clothes, and sometimes with the contents of his breakfast-table, saying, with a smile of satisfaction after they were gone, «Now let me suppose I have eaten a heartier breakfast than usual, and I am nothing out of pocket.» His generosity, it is true, used often to be carried to excess. He gave frequently on the mere impulse of the moment, and without discrimination. If the applicants for his bounty were poor and friendless, it was all that he asked to know. Like his own village pastor, he overflowed with benevolence, and

> «Careless their merits or their faults to scan,
> His pity gave ere charity began.»

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This profuse and undistinguishing liberality has sometimes been imputed to him as a fault; but it at least attested the excellence of his intentions and the kindness of his heart. The humanity and benevolence, however, that characterised the poet's disposition, were unhappily contaminated by a jealousy of the attainments and the reputation of others. He was feelingly conscious of this failing, and often used to complain of the uneasiness it cost him. In the minds of those who heard him on such occasions, all sense of the evil passion was lost in their amusement at the novelty and simplicity of his confessions. Vanity was another of the weaknesses of Goldsmith; but it was rather amusing than offensive in its operation. He was vain of his literary consequence, as was strongly discovered in the complaint he once made with regard to Lord Camden.—« I met him,» said he, « at Lord Clare's house in the country, and he took no more notice of me than if I had been an ordinary man.»

He had also the foible of being ambitious of shining in such exterior accomplishments as nature had denied him. This was whimsically illustrated on one occasion, when he arrayed himself in a bloom-coloured coat, and sported his ungainly figure, with great self-complacency, in the sunshine in the Temple-gardens. He declared to his friends, that his tailor was so confident of the impression he should make, that he had entreated him to inform all inquirers of the name of the maker of the coat.

Such is the amount of information which we have procured concerning Goldsmith; and we have given it almost precisely in the words in which we found it. From the general tenor of his biography, it is evident that Goldsmith was one whose faults were at the worst but negative, not positive vices, while his merits were great and decided. He was no one's enemy but his own, his errors inflicted evil on none but himself, and were so blended with humorous, and even affecting circumstances, as to disarm anger and conciliate kindness. Where eminent talent is united to spotless virtue, we are awed and dazzled into admiration, but our admiration is apt to be cold; while there is something in the harmless infirmities of poor human nature that pleads touchingly to the feelings, and the heart yearns towards

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the object of our admiration, when we find that, like ourselves, he is mortal, and is frail. The epithet so often heard, and in such kindly tones, of « poor Goldsmith,» speaks volumes. Few, who consider the rich compound of admirable and whimsical qualities which form his character, would wish to prune away its eccentricities, trim its grotesque luxuriance, and clip it down to the decent formalities of rigid virtue. « Let not his frailties be remembered,» said Johnson, « he was a very great man.» But, for our parts, we rather say, « let them be remembered;» for we question whether he himself would not feel gratified in hearing his reader, after dwelling with admiration on the proofs of his greatness, close the volume with the kind-hearted phrase, so fondly and familiarly ejaculated, of « Poor Goldsmith!»

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THE

VICAR OF WAKEFIELD.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THERE are a hundred faults in this thing, and a hundred things might be said to prove them beauties. But it is needless. A book may be amusing with numerous errors, or it may be very dull without a single absurdity. The hero of this piece unites in himself the three greatest characters upon earth: he is a priest, a husbandman, and the father of a family. He is drawn as ready to teach, and ready to obey; as simple in affluence, and majestic in adversity. In this age of opulence and refinement, whom can such a character please? Such as are fond of high life, will turn with disdain from the simplicity of his country fire-side. Such as mistake ribaldry for humour, will find no wit in his harmless conversation; and such as have been taught to deride religion, will laugh at one whose chief stores of comfort are drawn from futurity.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

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THE

VICAR OF WAKEFIELD.

CHAPTER I.

The description of the Family of WAKEFIELD, in which a kindred likeness prevails, as well of minds as of persons.

I WAS ever of opinion, that the honest man who married and brought up a large family, did more service than he who continued single and only talked of population. From this motive, I had scarcely taken orders a year, before I began to think seriously of matrimony, and chose my wife, as she did her wedding-gown, not for a fine glossy surface, but for such qualities as would wear well. To do her justice, she was a good-natured notable woman; and as for breeding, there were few country ladies who could show more. She could read any English book without much spelling; but for pickling, preserving, and cookery, none could excel her. She prided herself also upon being an excellent contriver in housekeeping; though I could never find that we grew richer with all her contrivances.

However, we loved each other tenderly, and our fondness increased as we grew old. There was, in fact, nothing

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that could make us angry with the world or each other. We had an elegant house situated in a fine country, and a good neighbourhood. The year was spent in moral or rural amusements, in visiting our rich neighbours, and relieving such as were poor. We had no revolutions to fear, nor fatigues to undergo; all our adventures were by the fire-side, and all our migrations from the blue bed to the brown.

As we lived near the road, we often had the traveller or stranger visit us to taste our gooseberry-wine, for which we had great reputation; and I profess with the veracity of an historian, that I never knew one of them find fault with it. Our cousins too, even to the fortieth remove, all remembered their affinity, without any help from the herald's office, and came very frequently to see us. Some of them did us no great honour by these claims of kindred; as we had the blind, the maimed, and the halt amongst the number. However, my wife always insisted that as they were the same *flesh and blood*, they should sit with us at the same table. So that if we had not very rich, we generally had very happy friends about us; for this remark will hold good through life, that the poorer the guest, the better pleased he ever is with being treated: and as some men gaze with admiration at the colours of a tulip, or the wings of a butterfly, so I was by nature an admirer of happy human faces. However, when any one of our relations was found to be a person of very bad character, a troublesome guest, or one we desired to get rid of, upon his leaving my house, I ever took care to lend him a riding-coat, or a pair of boots, or sometimes a horse of small value, and I always had the satisfaction of finding he never came back to return them. By this the house was cleared of such as we did not

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like; but never was the family of WAKEFIELD known to turn the traveller or the poor dependant out of doors.

Thus we lived several years in a state of much happiness, not but that we sometimes had those little rubs which Providence sends to enhance the value of its favours. My orchard was often robbed by schoolboys, and my wife's custards plundered by the cats or the children. The 'Squire would sometimes fall asleep in the most pathetic parts of my sermon, or his lady return my wife's civilities at church with a mutilated courtesy. But we soon got over the uneasiness caused by such accidents, and usually in three or four days began to wonder how they vexed us.

My children, the offspring of temperance, as they were educated without softness, so they were at once well formed and healthy; my sons hardy and active, my daughters beautiful and blooming. When I stood in the midst of the little circle, which promised to be the supports of my declining age, I could not avoid repeating the famous story of Count Abensberg, who, in Henry Second's progress through Germany, while other courtiers came with their treasures, brought his thirty-two children, and presented them to his sovereign as the most valuable offering he had to bestow. In this manner, though I had but six, I considered them as a very valuable present made to my country, and consequently looked upon it as my debtor. Our eldest son was named GEORGE, after his uncle, who left us ten thousand pounds. Our second child, a girl, I intended to call after her aunt Grissel; but my wife, who during her pregnancy had been reading romances, insisted upon her being called OLIVIA. In less than another year we had another daughter, and now I was determined that Grissel should be her name; but a rich relation taking a

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fancy to stand godmother, the girl was, by her directions, called SOPHIA; so that we had two romantic names in the family; but I solemnly protest I had no hand in it. MOSES was our next, and after an interval of twelve years, we had two sons more.

It would be fruitless to deny exultation when I saw my little ones about me; but the vanity and the satisfaction of my wife were even greater than mine. When our visitors would say, «Well, upon my word, Mrs Primrose, you have the finest children in the whole country;»—«Ay, neighbour,» she would answer, «they are as Heaven made them, handsome enough, if they be good enough; for handsome is that handsome does.» And then she would bid the girls hold up their heads; who, to conceal nothing, were certainly very handsome. Mere outside is so very trifling a circumstance with me, that I should scarcely have remembered to mention it, had it not been a general topic of conversation in the country. Olivia, now about eighteen, had that luxuriancy of beauty, with which painters generally draw Hebe; open, sprightly, and commanding. Sophia's features were not so striking at first, but often did more certain execution; for they were soft, modest, and alluring. The one vanquished by a single blow, the other by efforts successfully repeated.

The temper of a woman is generally formed from the turn of her features, at least it was so with my daughters. Olivia wished for many lovers, Sophia to secure one. Olivia was often affected from too great a desire to please. Sophia even repressed excellence from her fears to offend. The one entertained me with her vivacity when I was gay, the other with her sense when I was serious. But these qualities were never carried to excess in either, and I have often seen them exchange characters for a whole day together.

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A suit of mourning has transformed my coquette into a prude, and a new set of ribands has given her younger sister more than natural vivacity. My eldest son George was bred at Oxford, as I intended him for one of the learned professions. My second boy Moses, whom I designed for business, received a sort of miscellaneous education at home. But it is needless to attempt describing the particular characters of young people that had seen but very little of the world. In short, a family likeness prevailed through all, and properly speaking, they had but one character, that of being all equally generous, credulous, simple, and inoffensive.

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CHAPTER II.

Family Misfortunes.—The loss of fortune only serves to increase the pride of the worthy.

THE temporal concerns of our family were chiefly committed to my wife's management; as to the spiritual, I took them entirely under my own direction. The profits of my living, which amounted to but thirty-five pounds a-year, I made over to the orphans and widows of the clergy of our diocese; for having a fortune of my own, I was careless of temporalities, and felt a secret pleasure in doing my duty without reward. I also set a resolution of keeping no curate, and of being acquainted with every man in the parish, exhorting the married men to temperance, and the bachelors to matrimony; so that in a few years it was a common saying, that there were three strange wants at Wakefield, a parson wanting pride, young men wanting wives, and ale-houses wanting customers.

Matrimony was always one of my favourite topics, and I wrote several sermons to prove its happiness: but there was a peculiar tenet which I made a point of supporting; for I maintained with Whiston, that it was unlawful for a priest of the church of England, after the death of his first wife, to take a second; or, to express it in one word, I valued myself upon being a strict monogamist.

I was early initiated into this important dispute, on which so many laborious volumes have been written. I

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published some tracts upon the subject myself, which, as they never sold, I have the consolation of thinking were read only by the happy *few*. Some of my friends called this my weak side; but alas! they had not like me made it the subject of long contemplation. The more I reflected upon it, the more important it appeared. I even went a step beyond Whiston in displaying my principles: as he had engraven upon his wife's tomb that she was the *only* wife of William Whiston; so I wrote a similar epitaph for my wife, though still living, in which I extolled her prudence, economy, and obedience till death; and having got it copied fair, with an elegant frame, it was placed over the chimney-piece, where it answered several very useful purposes. It admonished my wife of her duty to me, and my fidelity to her; it inspired her with a passion for fame, and constantly put her in mind of her end.

It was thus, perhaps, from hearing marriage so often recommended, that my eldest son, just upon leaving college, fixed his affections upon the daughter of a neighbouring clergyman, who was a dignitary in the church, and in circumstances to give her a large fortune. But fortune was her smallest accomplishment. Miss ARABELLA WILMOT was allowed by all (except my two daughters) to be completely pretty. Her youth, health, and innocence, were still heightened by a complexion so transparent, and such a happy sensibility of look, as even age could not gaze on with indifference. As Mr Wilmot knew that I could make a very handsome settlement on my son, he was not averse to the match; so both families lived together in all that harmony which generally precedes an expected alliance. Being convinced by experience that the days of courtship are the most happy of our lives, I was willing enough to lengthen the period; and the various amuse

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ments which the young couple every day shared in each other's company seemed to increase their passion. We were generally awaked in the morning by music, and on fine days rode a hunting. The hours between breakfast and dinner the ladies devoted to dress and study: they usually read a page, and then gazed at themselves in the glass, which even philosophers might own often presented the page of greatest beauty. At dinner my wife took the lead; for as she always insisted upon carving every thing herself, it being her mother's way, she gave us upon these occasions the history of every dish. When we had dined, to prevent the ladies leaving us, I generally ordered the table to be removed; and sometimes, with the music-master's assistance, the girls would give us a very agreeable concert. Walking out, drinking tea, country-dances, and forfeits, shortened the rest of the day, without the assistance of cards, as I hated all manner of gaming, except backgammon, at which my old friend and I sometimes took a two-penny hit. Nor can I here pass over an ominous circumstance that happened the last time we played together; I only wanted to fling a quatre, and yet I threw deuce ace five times running.

Some months were elapsed in this manner, till at last it was thought convenient to fix a day for the nuptials of the young couple, who seemed earnestly to desire it. During the preparations for the wedding, I need not describe the busy importance of my wife, nor the sly looks of my daughters: in fact, my attention was fixed on another object, the completing a tract which I intended shortly to publish in defence of my favourite principle. As I looked upon this as a master-piece, both for argument and style, I could not in the pride of my heart avoid showing it to

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my old friend Mr Wilmot, as I made no doubt of receiving his approbation; but not till too late I discovered that he was most violently attached to the contrary opinion, and with good reason; for he was at that time actually courting a fourth wife. This, as may be expected, produced a dispute attended with some acrimony, which threatened to interrupt our intended alliance: but on the day before that appointed for the ceremony, we agreed to discuss the subject at large.

It was managed with proper spirit on both sides: he asserted that I was heterodox, I retorted the charge; he replied, and I rejoined. In the mean time, while the controversy was hottest, I was called out by one of my relations, who, with a face of concern, advised me to give up the dispute, at least till my son's wedding was over. «How!» cried I, «relinquish the cause of truth, and let him be a husband, already driven to the very verge of absurdity. You might as well advise me to give up my fortune as my argument.» «Your fortune,» returned my friend, «I am now sorry to inform you, is almost nothing. The merchant in town, in whose hands your money was lodged, has gone off, to avoid a statute of bankruptcy, and is thought not to have left a shilling in the pound. I was unwilling to shock you or the family with the account till after the wedding: but now it may serve to moderate your warmth in the argument; for, I suppose your own prudence will enforce the necessity of dissembling, at least till your son has the young lady's fortune secure.» — «Well,» returned I, «if what you tell me be true, and if I am to be a beggar, it shall never make me a rascal, or induce me to disavow my principles. I'll go this moment and inform the company of my circumstances: and as for

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the argument, I even here retract my former concessions in the old gentleman's favour, nor will I allow him now to be a husband in any sense of the expression.»

It would be endless to describe the different sensations of both families when I divulged the news of our misfortune: but what others felt was slight to what the lovers appeared to endure. Mr Wilmot, who seemed before sufficiently inclined to break off the match, was by this blow soon determined: one virtue he had in perfection, which was prudence, too often the only one that is left us at seventy-two.

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CHAPTER III.

A Migration.—The fortunate circumstances of our lives are generally found at last to be of our own procuring.

THE only hope of our family now was, that the report of our misfortune might be malicious or premature; but a letter from my agent in town soon came with a confirmation of every particular. The loss of fortune to myself alone would have been trifling; the only uneasiness I felt was for my family, who were to be humble without an education to render them callous to contempt.

Near a fortnight had passed before I attempted to restrain their affliction; for premature consolation is but the remembrancer of sorrow. During this interval, my thoughts were employed on some future means of supporting them; and at last a small cure of fifteen pounds a-year was offered me in a distant neighbourhood, where I could still enjoy my principles without molestation. With this proposal I joyfully closed, having determined to increase my salary by managing a little farm.

Having taken this resolution, my next care was to get together the wrecks of my fortune; and, all debts collected and paid, out of fourteen thousand pounds we had but four hundred remaining. My chief attention, therefore, was now to bring down the pride of my family to their circumstances; for I well knew that aspiring beg-

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gary is wretchedness itself. «You cannot be ignorant, my children,» cried I, «that no prudence of ours could have prevented our late misfortune; but prudence may do much in disappointing its effects. We are now poor, my fondlings, and wisdom bids us conform to our humble situation. Let us then, without repining, give up those splendours with which numbers are wretched, and seek in humbler circumstances that peace with which all may be happy. The poor live pleasantly without our help, why then should not we learn to live without theirs? No, my children, let us from this moment give up all pretensions to gentility; we have still enough left for happiness if we are wise, and let us draw upon content for the deficiencies of fortune.»

As my eldest son was bred a scholar, I determined to send him to town, where his abilities might contribute to our support and his own. The separation of friends and families is, perhaps, one of the most distressful circumstances attendant on penury. The day soon arrived on which we were to disperse for the first time. My son, after taking leave of his mother and the rest, who mingled their tears with their kisses, came to ask a blessing from me. This I gave him from my heart, and which, added to five guineas, was all the patrimony I had now to bestow. «You are going, my boy,» cried I, «to London on foot, in the manner Hooker, your great ancestor, travelled there before you. Take from me the same horse that was given him by the good Bishop Jewel, this staff, and this book too, it will be your comfort on the way: these two lines in it are worth a million, 'I have been young, and now am old; yet never saw I the righteous man forsaken, or his seed begging their bread.' Let this be your consolation as you travel on. Go, my boy; whatever be thy

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fortune, let me see [redacted] once a-year; still keep a good heart, and farewell." As he was possessed of integrity and honour, I was under no apprehensions from throwing him naked into the amphitheatre of life; for I knew he would act a good part, whether vanquished or victorious.

His departure only prepared the way for our own, which arrived a few days afterwards. The leaving a neighbourhood in which we had enjoyed so many hours of tranquillity, was not without a tear which scarcely fortitude itself could suppress. Besides, a journey of seventy miles to a family that had hitherto never been above ten from home, filled us with apprehension; and the cries of the poor, who followed us for some miles, contributed to increase it. The first day's journey brought us in safety within thirty miles of our future retreat, and we put up for the night at an obscure inn in a village by the way. When we were shown a room, I desired the landlord, in my usual way, to let us have his company, with which he complied, as what he drank would increase the bill next morning. He knew, however, the whole neighbourhood to which I was removing, particularly 'Squire THORNHILL, who was to be my landlord, and who lived within a few miles of the place. This gentleman he described as one who desired to know little more of the world than its pleasures, being particularly remarkable for his attachment to the fair sex. He observed that no virtue was able to resist his arts and assiduity, and that scarcely a farmer's daughter within ten miles round, but what had found him successful and faithless. Though this account gave me some pain, it had a very different effect upon my daughters, whose features seemed to brighten with the expectation of an approaching triumph; nor was my wife less pleased and confident of their allurements and

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virtue. While our thoughts were thus employed, the hostess entered the room to inform her husband, that the strange gentleman, who had been two days in the house, wanted money, and could not satisfy them for his reckoning. «Want money!» replied the host, «that must be impossible; for it was no later than yesterday he paid three guineas to our beadle to spare an old broken soldier that was to be whipped through the town for dog-stealing.» The hostess, however, still persisting in her first assertion, he was preparing to leave the room, swearing that he would be satisfied one way or another, when I begged the landlord would introduce me to a stranger of so much charity as he described. With this he complied, showing in a gentleman who seemed to be about thirty, dressed in clothes that once were laced. His person was well formed, and his face marked with the lines of thinking. He had something short and dry in his address, and seemed not to understand ceremony, or to despise it. Upon the landlord's leaving the room, I could not avoid expressing my concern to the stranger at seeing a gentleman in such circumstances, and offered him my purse to satisfy the present demand. «I take it with all my heart, sir,» replied he, «and am glad that a late oversight, in giving what money I had about me, has shown me that there are still some men like you. I must, however, previously entreat being informed of the name and residence of my benefactor, in order to repay him as soon as possible.» In this I satisfied him fully, not only mentioning my name and late misfortunes, but the place to which I was going to remove. «This,» cried he, «happens still more luckily than I hoped for, as I am going the same way myself, having been detained here two days by the floods, which I hope by to-morrow will be found passable.» I

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testified the pleasure I should have in his company, and my wife and daughters joining in entreaty, he was prevailed upon to stay supper. The stranger's conversation, which was at once pleasing and instructive, induced me to wish for a continuance of it; but it was now high time to retire and take refreshment against the fatigues of the following day.

The next morning we all set forward together: my family on horseback, while Mr BURCHELL, our new companion, walked along the foot-path by the road-side, observing with a smile, that as we were ill mounted, he would be too generous to attempt leaving us behind. As the floods were not yet subsided, we were obliged to hire a guide, who trotted on before, Mr Burchell and I bringing up the rear. We lightened the fatigues of the road with philosophical disputes, which he seemed to understand perfectly. But what surprised me most was, that though he was a money-borrower, he defended his opinions with as much obstinacy as if he had been my patron. He now and then also informed me to whom the different seats belonged that lay in our view as we travelled the road. «That,» cried he, pointing to a very magnificent house which stood at some distance, «belongs to Mr Thornhill, a young gentleman who enjoys a large fortune, though entirely dependent on the will of his uncle, Sir William Thornhill, a gentleman who, content with a little himself, permits his nephew to enjoy the rest, and chiefly resides in town.» «What!» cried I, «is my young landlord then the nephew of a man, whose virtues, generosity, and singularities are so universally known? I have heard Sir William Thornhill represented as one of the most generous yet whimsical men in the kingdom; a man of consummate benevolence.»— «Something, perhaps, too much so,» replied Mr Burchell,

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« at least he carried benevolence to an excess when young; for his passions were then strong, and as they were all upon the side of virtue, they led it up to a romantic extreme. He early began to aim at the qualifications of the soldier and scholar; was soon distinguished in the army, and had some reputation among men of learning. Adulation ever follows the ambitious; for such alone receive most pleasure from flattery. He was surrounded with crowds, who showed him only one side of their character; so that he began to lose a regard for private interest in universal sympathy. He loved all mankind; for fortune prevented him from knowing that there were rascals. Physicians tell us of a disorder, in which the whole body is so exquisitely sensible that the slightest touch gives pain: what some have thus suffered in their persons, this gentleman felt in his mind. The slightest distress, whether real or fictitious, touched him to the quick, and his soul laboured under a sickly sensibility of the miseries of others. Thus disposed to relieve, it will be easily conjectured he found numbers disposed to solicit; his profusions began to impair his fortune, but not his good-nature; that, indeed, was seen to increase as the other seemed to decay: he grew improvident as he grew poor; and though he talked like a man of sense, his actions were those of a fool. Still, however, being surrounded with importunity, and no longer able to satisfy every request that was made him, instead of *money* he gave *promises*. They were all he had to bestow, and he had not resolution enough to give any man pain by a denial. By this he drew round him crowds of dependants, whom he was sure to disappoint, yet wished to relieve. These hung upon him for a time, and left him with merited reproaches and contempt. But in proportion as he became contemptible to others, he became

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despicable to himself. His mind had leaned upon their adulation, and that support taken away, he could find no pleasure in the applause of his heart, which he had never learned to reverence. The world now began to wear a different aspect; the flattery of his friends began to dwindle into simple approbation. Approbation soon took the more friendly form of advice, and advice, when rejected, produced their reproaches. He now therefore found, that such friends as benefits had gathered round him, were little estimable: he now found that a man's own heart must be ever given to gain that of another. I now found, that—that—I forget what I was going to observe: in short, sir, he resolved to respect himself, and laid down a plan of restoring his falling fortune. For this purpose, in his own whimsical manner, he travelled through Europe on foot, and now, though he has scarcely attained the age of thirty, his circumstances are more affluent than ever. At present, his bounties are more rational and moderate than before; but still he preserves the character of a humorist, and finds most pleasure in eccentric virtues.»

My attention was so much taken up by Mr Burchell's account, that I scarcely looked forward as he went along, till we were alarmed by the cries of my family, when turning, I perceived my youngest daughter in the midst of a rapid stream, thrown from her horse, and struggling with the torrent. She had sunk twice, nor was it in my power to disengage myself in time to bring her relief. My sensations were even too violent to permit my attempting her rescue: she must have certainly perished had not my companion, perceiving her danger, instantly plunged in to her relief, and, with some difficulty, brought her in safety to the opposite shore. By taking the current a little farther up, the rest of the family got safely over, where we

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had an opportunity of joining our acknowledgments to her's. Her gratitude may be more readily imagined than described: she thanked her deliverer more with looks than words, and continued to lean upon his arm, as if still willing to receive assistance. My wife also hoped one day to have the pleasure of returning his kindness at her own house. Thus, after we were refreshed at the next inn, and had dined together, as Mr Burchell was going to a different part of the country, he took leave; and we pursued our journey: my wife observing as he went, that she liked him extremely, and protesting, that if he had birth and fortune to entitle him to match into such a family as our's, she knew no man she would sooner fix upon. I could not but smile to hear her talk in this lofty strain; but I was never much displeased with those harmless delusions that tend to make us more happy.

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CHAPTER IV.

A Proof that even the humblest Fortune may grant Happiness, which depends not on circumstances but constitution.

THE place of our retreat was in a little neighbourhood, consisting of farmers, who tilled their own grounds, and were equal strangers to opulence and poverty. As they had almost all the conveniencies of life within themselves, they seldom visited towns or cities, in search of superfluity. Remote from the polite, they still retained the primeval simplicity of manners; and frugal by habit, they scarcely knew that temperance was a virtue. They wrought with cheerfulness on days of labour; but observed festivals as intervals of idleness and pleasure. They kept up the Christmas carol, sent true love-knots on Valentine morning, ate pancakes on Shrove-tide, showed their wit on the first of April, and religiously cracked nuts on Michaelmas eve. Being apprized of our approach, the whole neighbourhood came out to meet their minister, dressed in their finest clothes, and preceded by a pipe and tabor. A feast also was provided for our reception, at which we sat cheerfully down; and what the conversation wanted in wit, was made up in laughter.

Our little habitation was situated at the foot of a sloping hill, sheltered with a beautiful underwood behind, and a prattling river before: on one side a meadow, on the other

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a green. My farm consisted of about twenty acres of excellent land, having given a hundred pounds for my predecessor's good-will. Nothing could exceed the neatness of my little enclosures; the elms and hedge-rows appearing with inexpressible beauty. My house consisted of but one storey, and was covered with thatch, which gave it an air of great snugness; the walls on the inside were nicely white-washed, and my daughters undertook to adorn them with pictures of their own designing. Though the same room served us for parlour and kitchen, that only made it the warmer. Besides, as it was kept with the utmost neatness, the dishes, plates, and coppers being well scoured, and all disposed in bright rows on the shelves, the eye was agreeably relieved, and did not want richer furniture. There were three other apartments, one for my wife and me, another for our two daughters, within our own, and the third, with two beds, for the rest of the children.

The little republic to which I gave laws, was regulated in the following manner: by sun-rise we all assembled in our common apartment; the fire being previously kindled by the servant. After we had saluted each other with proper ceremony, for I always thought fit to keep up some mechanical forms of good-breeding, without which freedom ever destroys friendship, we all bent in gratitude to that Being who gave us another day. This duty being performed, my son and I went to pursue our usual industry abroad, while my wife and daughters employed themselves in providing breakfast, which was always ready at a certain time. I allowed half an hour for this meal, and an hour for dinner; which time was taken up in innocent mirth between my wife and daughters, and in philosophical arguments between my son and me.

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As we rose with the sun, so we never pursued our labours after it was gone down, but returned home to the expecting family; where smiling looks, a neat hearth, and pleasant fire, were prepared for our reception. Nor were we without guests: sometimes Farmer Flamborough, our talkative neighbour, and often the blind piper, would pay us a visit, and taste our gooseberry-wine; for the making of which we had lost neither the receipt nor the reputation. These harmless people had several ways of being good company; while one played, the other would sing some soothing ballad, Johnny Armstrong's last good night, or the cruelty of Barbara Allen. The night was concluded in the manner we began the morning, my youngest boys being appointed to read the lessons of the day; and he that read loudest, distinctest, and best, was to have a halfpenny on Sunday to put in the poor's box.

When Sunday came, it was indeed a day of finery, which all my sumptuary edicts could not restrain. How well soever I fancied my lectures against pride had conquered the vanity of my daughters, yet I found them still secretly attached to all their former finery: they still loved laces, ribands, bugles, and catgut; my wife herself retained a passion for her crimson paduasoy, because I formerly happened to say it became her.

The first Sunday in particular their behaviour served to mortify me: I had desired my girls the preceding night to be dressed early the next day; for I always loved to be at church a good while before the rest of the congregation. They punctually obeyed my directions; but when we were to assemble in the morning at breakfast, down came my wife and daughters dressed out in all their former splendor: their hair plastered up with pomatum, their faces patched to taste, their trains bundled up in a heap behind, and

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rustling at every motion. I could not help smiling at their vanity, particularly that of my wife, from whom I expected more discretion. In this exigence, therefore, my only resource was to order my son, with an important air, to call our coach. The girls were amazed at the command; but I repeated it with more solemnity than before—« Surely, my dear, you jest,» cried my wife, « we can walk it perfectly well: we want no coach to carry us now.» « You mistake, child,» returned I, « we do want a coach; for if we walk to church in this trim, the very children in the parish will hoot after us.»—« Indeed,» replied my wife, « I always imagined that my Charles was fond of seeing his children neat and handsome about him.»—« You may be as neat as you please,» interrupted I, « and I shall love you the better for it; but all this is not neatness, but frippery. These ruffflings, and pinkings, and patchings, will only make us hated by all the wives of all our neighbours. No, my children,» continued I, more gravely, « those gowns may be altered into something of a plainer cut; for finery is very unbecoming in us, who want the means of decency. I do not know whether such flouncing and shredding is becoming even in the rich, if we consider, upon a moderate calculation, that the nakedness of the indigent world might be clothed from the trimmings of the vain.»

This remonstrance had the proper effect; they went with great composure, that very instant, to change their dress; and the next day I had the satisfaction of finding my daughters, at their own request, employed in cutting up their trains into Sunday waistcoats for Dick and Bill, the two little ones, and, what was still more satisfactory, the gowns seemed improved by this curtailing.

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CHAPTER V.

A new and great Acquaintance introduced.—What we place most hopes upon, generally proves most fatal.

At a small distance from the house, my predecessor had made a seat, overshadowed by a hedge of hawthorn and honeysuckle. Here, when the weather was fine and our labour soon finished, we usually sat together, to enjoy an extensive landscape in the calm of the evening. Here too we drank tea, which was now become an occasional banquet; and as we had it but seldom, it diffused a new joy, the preparations for it being made with no small share of bustle and ceremony. On these occasions our two little ones always read to us, and they were regularly served after we had done. Sometimes, to give a variety to our amusements, the girls sang to the guitar; and while they thus formed a little concert, my wife and I would stroll down the sloping field, that was embellished with bluebells and centaury, talk of our children with rapture, and enjoy the breeze that wafted both health and harmony.

In this manner we began to find that every situation in life might bring its own peculiar pleasures: every morning awaked us to a repetition of toil; but the evening repaid it with vacant hilarity.

It was about the beginning of autumn, on a holiday, for I kept such as intervals of relaxation from labour, that I had drawn out my family to our usual place of amusement, and our young musicians began their usual concert. As we were thus engaged, we saw a stag bound

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nimbly by, within about twenty paces of where we were sitting, and by its panting it seemed pressed by the hunters. We had not much time to reflect upon the poor animal's distress, when we perceived the dogs and horsemen come sweeping along at some distance behind, and making the very path it had taken. I was instantly for returning in with my family; but either curiosity, or surprise, or some more hidden motive, held my wife and daughters to their seats. The huntsman, who rode foremost, passed us with great swiftness, followed by four or five persons more who seemed in equal haste. At last, a young gentleman of a more genteel appearance than the rest came forward, and for a while regarding us, instead of pursuing the chase, stopped short, and giving his horse to a servant who attended, approached us with a careless superior air. He seemed to want no introduction, but was going to salute my daughters, as one certain of a kind reception; but they had early learned the lesson of looking presumption out of countenance. Upon which he let us know his name was Thornhill, and that he was owner of the estate that lay for some extent round us. He again therefore offered to salute the female part of the family, and such was the power of fortune and fine clothes, that he found no second repulse. As his address, though confident, was easy, we soon became more familiar; and perceiving musical instruments lying near, he begged to be favoured with a song. As I did not approve of such disproportioned acquaintances, I winked upon my daughters in order to prevent their compliance; but my hint was counteracted by one from their mother; so that, with a cheerful air, they gave us a favourite song of Dryden's. Mr Thornhill seemed highly delighted with their performance and choice, and then took up the guitar himself. He played but very indifferently;

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however, my eldest daughter repaid his former applause with interest, and assured him that his tones were louder than even those of her master. At this compliment he bowed, which she returned with a courtesy. He praised her taste, and she commended his understanding; an age could not have made them better acquainted: while the fond mother, too, equally happy, insisted upon her landlord's stepping in, and tasting a glass of her gooseberry. The whole family seemed earnest to please him: my girls attempted to entertain him with topics they thought most modern, while Moses, on the contrary, gave him a question or two from the ancients, for which he had the satisfaction of being laughed at: my little ones were no less busy, and fondly stuck close to the stranger. All my endeavours could scarcely keep their dirty fingers from handling and tarnishing the lace on his clothes, and lifting up the flaps of his pocket-holes, to see what was there. At the approach of evening he took leave; but not till he had requested permission to renew his visit, which, as he was our landlord, we most readily agreed to.

As soon as he was gone, my wife called a council on the conduct of the day. She was of opinion, that it was a most fortunate hit; for that she had known even stranger things at last brought to bear. She hoped again to see the day in which we might hold up our heads with the best of them; and concluded, she protested she could see no reason why the two Miss Wrinkles should marry great fortunes, and her children get none. As this last argument was directed to me, I protested I could see no reason for it neither, nor why Mr Simkins got the ten thousand pound prize in the lottery, and we sat down with a blank. «I protest, Charles,» cried my wife, «this is the way you always damp my girls and me when we are in spirits.

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Tell me, Sophy, my dear, what do you think of our new visitor? Don't you think he seemed to be good-natured?» —« Immensely so indeed, mamma,» replied she, « I think he has a great deal to say upon every thing, and is never at a loss; and the more trifling the subject, the more he has to say.»—« Yes,» cried Olivia, « he is well enough for a man; but for my part, I don't much like him, he is so extremely impudent and familiar; but on the guitar he is shocking.» These two last speeches I interpreted by contraries. I found by this, that Sophia internally despised, as much as Olivia secretly admired him.—« Whatever may be your opinions of him, my children,» cried I, « to confess the truth, he has not prepossessed me in his favour. Disproportioned friendships ever terminate in disgust; and I thought, notwithstanding all his ease, that he seemed perfectly sensible of the distance between us. Let us keep to companions of our own rank. There is no character more contemptible than a man that is a fortune-hunter; and I can see no reason why fortune-hunting women should not be contemptible too. Thus, at best, we shall be contemptible if his views be honourable; but if they be otherwise! I should shudder but to think of that. It is true I have no apprehensions from the conduct of my children, but I think there are some from his character.» —I would have proceeded, but for the interruption of a servant from the 'Squire, who, with his compliments, sent us a side of venison, and a promise to dine with us some days after. This well-timed present pleaded more powerfully in his favour, than any thing I had to say could obviate. I therefore continued silent, satisfied with just having pointed out danger, and leaving it to their own discretion to avoid it. That virtue which requires to be ever guarded is scarcely worth the sentinel.

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CHAPTER VI.

The Happiness of a Country Fire-side.

As we carried on the former dispute with some degree of warmth, in order to accommodate matters, it was universally agreed, that we should have a part of the venison for supper; and the girls undertook the task with alacrity. « I am sorry, » cried I, « that we have no neighbour or stranger to take a part in this good cheer: feasts of this kind acquire a double relish from hospitality. »—« Bless me, » cried my wife, « here comes our good friend Mr Burchell, that saved our Sophia, and that run you down fairly in the argument. » —« Confute me in argument, child! » cried I. « You mistake there, my dear; I believe there are but few that can do that: I never dispute your abilities at making a goose-pie, and I beg you 'll leave argument to me. »—As I spoke, poor Mr Burchell entered the house, and was welcomed by the family, who shook him heartily by the hand, while little Dick officiously reached him a chair.

I was pleased with the poor man's friendship for two reasons: because I knew that he wanted mine, and I knew him to be friendly as far as he was able. He was known in our neighbourhood by the character of the poor gentleman that would do no good when he was young, though he was not yet thirty. He would at intervals talk with great good sense; but in general he was fondest of the com-

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pany of children, whom he used to call harmless little men. He was famous, I found, for singing them ballads, and telling them stories; and seldom went out without something in his pockets for them; a piece of gingerbread, or a halfpenny whistle. He generally came for a few days into our neighbourhood once a-year, and lived upon the neighbours' hospitality. He sat down to supper among us, and my wife was not sparing of her gooseberry-wine. The tale went round; he sang us old songs, and gave the children the story of the Buck of Beverland, with the history of Patient Grissel, the adventures of Catskin, and then Fair Rosamond's Bower. Our cock, which always crew at eleven, now told us it was time for repose; but an unforeseen difficulty started about lodging the stranger—all our beds were already taken up, and it was too late to send him to the next ale-house. In this dilemma, little Dick offered him his part of the bed, if his brother Moses would let him lie with him: «And I,» cried Bill, «will give Mr Burchell my part, if my sisters will take me to theirs.»—«Well done, my good children,» cried I, «hospitality is one of the first Christian duties. The beast retires to its shelter, and the bird flies to its nest; but helpless man can only find refuge from his fellow-creature. The greatest stranger in this world, was he that came to save it. He never had a house, as if willing to see what hospitality was left remaining amongst us. Deborah, my dear,» cried I to my wife, «give those boys a lump of sugar each, and let Dick's be the largest, because he spoke first.»

In the morning early I called out my whole family to help at saving an after-growth of hay, and our guest offering his assistance, he was accepted among the number. Our labours went on lightly; we turned the swath to the wind. I went foremost, and the rest followed in due suc-

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cession. I could not avoid, however, observing the assiduity of Mr Burchell in assisting my daughter Sophia in her part of the task. When he had finished his own, he would join in her's, and enter into a close conversation; but I had too good an opinion of Sophia's understanding, and was too well convinced of her ambition, to be under any uneasiness from a man of broken fortune. When we were finished for the day, Mr Burchell was invited as on the night before; but he refused, as he was to lie that night at a neighbour's, to whose child he was carrying a whistle. When gone, our conversation at supper turned upon our late unfortunate guest. « What a strong instance, » said I, « is that poor man of the miseries attending a youth of levity and extravagance. He by no means wants sense, which only serves to aggravate his former folly. Poor forlorn creature, where are now the revellers, the flatterers, that he could once inspire and command! Gone, perhaps, to attend the bagnio pander, grown rich by his extravagance. They once praised him, and now they applaud the pander: their former raptures at his wit are now converted into sarcasms at his folly: he is poor, and perhaps deserves poverty; for he has neither the ambition to be independent, nor the skill to be useful. » Prompted perhaps by some secret reasons, I delivered this observation with too much acrimony, which my Sophia gently reproved. « Whatsoever his former conduct may have been, papa, his circumstances should exempt him from censure now. His present indigence is a sufficient punishment for former folly; and I have heard my papa himself say, that we should never strike our unnecessary blow at a victim over whom Providence holds the scourge of its resentment. »— « You are right, Sophy, » cried my son Moses, « and one of the ancients finely represents so malicious a conduct, by

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the attempts of a rustic to flay Marsyas, whose skin, the fable tells us, had been wholly strippde off by another. Besides, I don't know if this poor man's situation be so bad as my father would represent it. We are not to judge of the feelings of others by what we might feel if in their place. However dark the habitation of the mole to our eyes, yet the animal itself finds the apartment sufficiently lightsome. And to confess a truth, this man's mind seems fitted to his station; for I never heard any one more sprightly than he was to-day, when he conversed with you.»—This was said without the least design, however it excited a blush, which she strove to cover by an affected laugh, assuring him, that she scarcely took any notice of what he said to her; but that she believed he might once have been a very fine gentleman. The readiness with which she undertook to vindicate herself, and her blushing, were symptoms I did not internally approve; but I repressed my suspicions.

As we expected our landlord the next day, my wife went to make the venison pasty. Moses sat reading, while I taught the little ones: my daughters seemed equally busy with the rest; and I observed them for a good while cooking something over the fire. I at first supposed they were assisting their mother; but little Dick informed me in a whisper, that they were making a *wash* for the face. Washes of all kinds I had a natural antipathy to; for I knew that instead of mending the complexion, they spoiled it. I therefore approached my chair by sly degrees to the fire, and grasping the poker, as if it wanted mending, seemingly by accident overturned the whole composition, and it was too late to begin another.

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CHAPTER VII.

A Town Wit described.—The dullest fellows may learn to be comical for a night or two.

When the morning arrived on which we were to entertain our young landlord, it may be easily supposed what provisions were exhausted to make an appearance. It may also be conjectured that my wife and daughters expanded their gayest plumage upon this occasion. Mr Thornhill came with a couple of friends, his chaplain and feeder. The servants, who were numerous, he politely ordered to the next alehouse, but my wife, in the triumph of her heart, insisted on entertaining them all; for which, by the by, our family was pinched for three weeks after. As Mr Burchell had hinted to us the day before, that he was making some proposals of marriage to Miss Wilmot, my son George's former mistress, this a good deal damped the heartiness of his reception: but accident in some measure relieved our embarrassment; for one of the company happening to mention her name, Mr Thornhill observed with an oath, that he never knew any thing more absurd than calling such a fright a beauty: « For strike me ugly,» continued he, « if I should not find as much pleasure in choosing my mistress by the information of a lamp under the clock at St Dunstan's.» At this he laughed, and so did we:—the jests of the rich are ever successful. Olivia too

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could not avoid whispering loud enough to be heard, that he had an infinite fund of humour.

After dinner, I began with my usual toast, the Church; for this I was thanked by the chaplain, as he said the Church was the only mistress of his affections.—« Come, tell us honestly, Frank,» said the 'Squire, with his usual archness, « suppose the Church, your present mistress, dressed in lawn sleeves, on one hand, and Miss Sophia, with no lawn about her, on the other, which would you be for?» « For both, to be sure,» cried the chaplain.—« Right, Frank,» cried the 'Squire, « for may this glass suffocate me but a fine girl is worth all the priestcraft in the creation. For what are tithes and tricks but an imposition, all a confounded imposture, and I can prove it.»—« I wish you would,» cried my son Moses; « and I think,» continued he, « that I should be able to answer you.»—« Very well, sir,» cried the 'Squire, who immediately smoked him, and winking on the rest of the company to prepare us for the sport, « if you are for a cool argument upon that subject, I am ready to accept the challenge. And first, whether are you for managing it analogically or dialogically?» « I am for managing it rationally,» cried Moses, quite happy at being permitted to dispute. « Good again,» cried the 'Squire, « and firstly, of the first: I hope you'll not deny, that whatever is, is. If you don't grant me that, I can go no farther.»—« Why,» returned Moses, « I think I may grant that, and make the best of it.»—« I hope, too,» returned the other, « you'll grant that a part is less than the whole.» « I grant that too,» cried Moses, « it is but just and reasonable.»—« I hope,» cried the 'Squire, « you will not deny, that the two angles of a triangle are equal to two right ones.»—« Nothing can be plainer,» returned t' other, and looked round with his usual importance.—« Very

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well,» cried the 'Squire, speaking very quick, « the premises being thus settled, I proceed to observe, that the concatenation of self-existence, proceeding in a reciprocal duplicate ratio, naturally produce a problematical dialogism, which in some measure proves that the essence of spirituality may be referred to the second predicable.»—« Hold, hold,» cried the other, « I deny that: Do you think I can thus tamely submit to such heterodox doctrines?»—« What!» replied the 'Squire, as if in a passion, « not submit! Answer me one plain question: Do you think Aristotle right when he says, that relatives are related?» « Undoubtedly,» replied the other. « If so, then,» cried the 'Squire, « answer me directly to what I propose: Whether do you judge the analytical investigation of the first part of my enthymem deficient secundum quoad, or quoad minus, and give me your reasons: give me your reasons, I say, directly.»—« I protest,» cried Moses, « I don't rightly comprehend the force of your reasoning; but if it be reduced to one simple proposition, I fancy it may then have an answer.»—« O sir,» cried the 'Squire, « I am your most humble servant; I find you want me to furnish you with argument and intellects too. No, sir, there I protest you are too hard for me.» This effectually raised the laugh against poor Moses, who sat the only dismal figure in a group of merry faces; nor did he offer a single syllable more during the whole entertainment.

But though all this gave me no pleasure, it had a very different effect upon Olivia, who mistook it for humour, though but a mere act of the memory. She thought him therefore a very fine gentleman; and such as consider what powerful ingredients a good figure, fine clothes, and fortune are in that character, will easily forgive her. Mr Thornhill, notwithstanding his real igno-

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rance, talked with ease, and could expatiate upon the common topics of conversation with fluency. It is not surprising then, that such talents should win the affections of a girl, who by education was taught to value an appearance in herself, and consequently to set a value upon it in another.

Upon his departure, we again entered into a debate upon the merits of our young landlord. As he directed his looks and conversation to Olivia, it was no longer doubted but that she was the object that induced him to be our visitor. Nor did she seem to be much displeased at the innocent raillery of her brother and sister upon this occasion. Even Deborah herself seemed to share the glory of the day, and exulted in her daughter's victory as if it were her own. « And now, my dear,» cried she to me, « I 'll fairly own, that it was I that instructed my girls to encourage our landlord's addresses. I had always some ambition, and you now see that I was right; for who knows how this may end?» « Ay, who knows that indeed!» answered I, with a groan: « For my part, I don't much like it: and I could have been better pleased with one that was poor and honest, than this fine gentleman with his fortune and infidelity; for depend on't, if he be what I suspect him, no free-thinker shall ever have a child of mine.»

« Sure, father,» cried Moses, « you are too severe in this; for Heaven will never arraign him for what he thinks, but for what he does. Every man has a thousand vicious thoughts, which arise without his power to suppress. Thinking freely of religion may be involuntary with this gentleman; so that allowing his sentiments to be wrong, yet as he is purely passive in his assent, he is no more to be blamed for his errors, than the governor of a city without

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walls for the shelter he is obliged to afford an invading enemy.»

« True, my son,» cried I; « but if the governor invites the enemy there, he is justly culpable. And such is always the case with those who embrace error. The vice does not lie in assenting to the proofs they see; but in being blind to many of the proofs that offer. So that, though our erroneous opinions be involuntary when formed, yet as we have been wilfully corrupt, or very negligent in forming them, we deserve punishment for our vice, or contempt for our folly.»

My wife now kept up the conversation, though not the argument: she observed, that several very prudent men of our acquaintance were free-thinkers, and made very good husbands; and she knew some sensible girls that had skill enough to make converts of their spouses: « And who knows, my dear,» continued she, « what Olivia may be able to do. The girl has a great deal to say upon every subject, and to my knowledge is very well skilled in controversy.»

« Why, my dear, what controversy can she have read?» cried I: « It does not occur to me that I ever put such books into her hands: you certainly overrate her merit.» « Indeed, papa,» replied Olivia, « she does not: I have read a great deal of controversy. I have read the disputes between Thwackum and Square; the controversy between Robinson Crusoe and Friday the savage, and am now employed in reading the controversy in Religious Courtship.» « Very well,» cried I, « that's a good girl, I find you are perfectly qualified for making converts; and so go help your mother to make the gooseberry-pie.»

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CHAPTER VIII.

An Amour, which promises little good Fortune, yet may be productive of much.

The next morning we were again visited by Mr Burchell, though I began, for certain reasons, to be displeased with the frequency of his return; but I could not refuse him my company and my fire-side. It is true, his labour more than requited his entertainment; for he wrought among us with vigour, and either in the meadow or at the hay-rick put himself foremost. Besides, he had always something amusing to say that lessened our toil, and was at once so out of the way, and yet so sensible, that I loved, laughed at, and pitied him. My only dislike arose from an attachment he discovered to my daughter: he would, in a jesting manner, call her his little mistress, and when he bought each of the girls a set of ribands, her's was the finest. I knew not how, but he every day seemed to become more amiable, his wit to improve, and his simplicity to assume the superiour airs of wisdom.

Our family dined in the field, and we sat, or rather reclined round a temperate repast, our cloth spread upon the hay, while Mr Burchell gave cheerfulness to the feast. To heighten our satisfaction, two blackbirds answered each other from opposite hedges, the familiar red-breast came and pecked the crumbs from our hands, and every sound seemed but the echo of tranquillity. « I never sit thus, »

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says Sophia, « but I think of the two lovers so sweetly described by Mr Gay, who were struck dead in each other's arms. There is something so pathetic in the description, that I have read it a hundred times with new rapture.»— « In my opinion,» cried my son, « the finest strokes in that description are much below those in the Acis and Galatea of Ovid. The Roman poet understands the use of *contrast* better; and upon that figure artfully managed, all strength in the pathetic depends.»—« It is remarkable,» cried Mr Burchell, « that both the poets you mention have equally contributed to introduce a false taste into their respective countries, by loading all their lines with epithet. Men of little genius found them most easily imitated in their defects, and English poetry, like that in the latter empire of Rome, is nothing at present but a combination of luxuriant images, without plot or connexion; a string of epithets that improve the sound, without carrying on the sense. But perhaps, madam, while I thus reprehend others, you'll think it just that I should give them an opportunity to retaliate, and indeed I have made this remark only to have an opportunity of introducing to the company a ballad, which, whatever be its other defects, is, I think, at least free from those I have mentioned.»[1]

A BALLAD.

« Turn, gentle Hermit of the dale,
And guide my lonely way,
To where yon taper cheers the vale
With hospitable ray.

[1] We have introduced this beautiful poem in this place, because it appears to be too intimately connected with the story to be omitted with any propriety, though it is inserted in the next volume among the rest of the Doctor's poetical productions.

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« For here forlorn and lost I tread,
With fainting steps and slow;
Where wilds, immeasurably spread,
Seem length'ning as I go.»

« Forbear, my son,» the Hermit cries,
« To tempt the dangerous gloom;
For yonder faithless phantom flies
To lure thee to thy doom.

« Here to the houseless child of want
My door is open still;
And though my portion is but scant,
I give it with good will.

« Then turn to-night, and freely share
Whate'er my cell bestows;
My rushy couch and frugal fare,
My blessing and repose.

« No flocks that range the valley free,
To slaughter I condemn;
Taught by that Power that pities me,
I learn to pity them:

« But from the mountain's grassy side
A guiltless feast I bring;
A scrip with herbs and fruits supplied,
And water from the spring.

« Then, pilgrim, turn, thy cares forego;
All earth-born cares are wrong;
Man wants but little here below,
Nor wants that little long.»

Soft as the dew from Heaven descends,
His gentle accents fell:
The modest stranger lowly bends,
And follows to the cell.

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Far in a wilderness obscure
The lonely mansion lay,
A refuge to the neighb'ring poor
And strangers led astray.

No stores beneath its humble thatch
Required a master's care;
The wicket, opening with a latch,
Received the harmless pair.

And now, when busy crowds retire
To take their evening rest,
The Hermit trimm'd his little fire,
And cheer'd his pensive guest:

And spread his vegetable store,
And gaily press'd, and smiled;
And, skill'd in legendary lore,
The lingering hours beguiled.

Around in sympathetic mirth
Its tricks the kitten tries,
The cricket chirrups in the hearth,
The crackling faggot flies.

But nothing could a charm impart
To soothe the stranger's woe;
For grief was heavy at his heart,
And tears began to flow.

His rising cares the Hermit spied,
With answering care oppress'd:
"And whence, unhappy youth," he cried,
"The sorrows of thy breast?

"From better habitations spurn'd,
Reluctant dost thou rove?
Or grieve for friendship unreturn'd,
Or unregarded love?

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« Alas! the joys that fortune brings,
Are trifling, and decay;
And those who prize the paltry things,
More trifling still than they.

« And what is friendship but a name,
A charm that lulls to sleep;
A shade that follows wealth or fame,
But leaves the wretch to weep?

« And love is still an emptier sound,
The modern fair one's jest;
On earth unseen, or only found
To warm the turtle's nest.

« For shame, fond youth, thy sorrows hush,
And spurn the sex,» he said;
But while he spoke, a rising blush
His love-lorn guest betray'd.

Surprised he sees new beauties rise,
Swift mantling to the view;
Like colours o'er the morning skies,
As bright, as transient too.

The bashful look, the rising breast,
Alternate spread alarms:
The lovely stranger stands confest
A maid in all her charms.

« And ah! forgive a stranger rude,
A wretch forlorn,» she cried;
« Whose feet unhallow'd thus intrude
Where Heaven and you reside.

« But let a maid thy pity share,
Whom love has taught to stray;
Who seeks for rest, but finds despair
Companion of her way.

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« My father lived beside the Tyne,
A wealthy lord was he;
And all his wealth was mark'd as mine,
He had but only me.

« To win me from his tender arms,
Unnumber'd suitors came;
Who praised me for imputed charms,
And felt, or feign'd a flame.

« Each hour a mercenary crowd
With richest proffers strove;
Amongst the rest young Edwin bow'd,
But never talk'd of love.

« In humble, simplest habit clad,
No wealth nor power had he;
Wisdom and worth were all he had,
But these were all to me.

« And when, beside me in the dale,
He carol'd lays of love,
His breath lent fragrance to the gale,
And music to the grove.

« The blossom opening to the day,
The dews of Heaven refined,
Could nought of purity display
To emulate his mind.

« The dew, the blossom on the tree,
With charms inconstant shine;
Their charms were his, but, woe to me!
Their constancy was mine.

« For still I tried each fickle art,
Importunate and vain;
And while his passion touch'd my heart,
I triumph'd in his pain:

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« Till quite dejected with my scorn,
He left me to my pride;
And sought a solitude forlorn,
In secret, where he died.

« But mine the sorrow, mine the fault,
And well my life shall pay;
I'll seek the solitude he sought,
And stretch me where he lay.

« And there forlorn, despairing, hid,
I'll lay me down and die;
'Twas so for me that Edwin did,
And so for him will I.»

« Forbid it, Heaven !» the Hermit cried,
And clasp'd her to his breast:
The wondering fair one turn'd to chide—
'Twas Edwin's self that press'd.

« Turn, Angelina, ever dear,
My charmer, turn to see
Thy own, thy long-lost Edwin here,
Restored to love and thee.

« Thus let me hold thee to my heart,
And every care resign;
And shall we never, never part,
My life—my all that's mine?

« No, never from this hour to part,
We'll live and love so true;
The sigh that rends thy constant heart,
Shall break thy Edwin's too.»

While this ballad was reading, Sophia seemed to mix an air of tenderness with her approbation. But our tranquillity was soon disturbed by the report of a gun just by us,

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and immediately after a man was seen bursting through the hedge, to take up the game he had killed. This sportsman was the 'Squire's chaplain, who had shot one of the blackbirds that so agreeably entertained us. So loud a report and so near, startled my daughters; and I could perceive that Sophia in the fright had thrown herself into Mr Burchell's arms for protection. The gentleman came up, and asked pardon for having disturbed us, affirming that he was ignorant of our being so near. He therefore sat down by my youngest daughter, and sportsman-like, offered her what he had killed that morning. She was going to refuse, but a private look from her mother soon induced her to correct the mistake, and accept his present, though with some reluctance. My wife, as usual, discovered her pride in a whisper, observing, that Sophy had made a conquest of the chaplain, as well as her sister had of the 'Squire. I suspected, however, with more probability, that her affections were placed upon a different object. The chaplain's errand was to inform us, that Mr Thornhill had provided music and refreshments, and intended that night giving the young ladies a ball by moonlight, on the grass-plot before our door. « Nor can I deny, » continued he, « but I have an interest in being first to deliver this message, as I expect for my reward to be honoured with Miss Sophy's hand as a partner. » To this my girl replied, that she should have no objection, if she could do it with honour; « but here, » continued she, « is a gentleman, » looking at Mr Burchell, « who has been my companion in the task for the day, and it is fit he should share in its amusements. » Mr Burchell returned her a compliment for her intentions; but resigned her up to the chaplain, adding that he was to go that night five miles, being invited to a harvest supper. His refusal appeared

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to me a little extraordinary; nor could I conceive how so sensible a girl as my youngest, could thus prefer a man of broken fortunes to one whose expectations were much greater. But as men are most capable of distinguishing merit in women, so the ladies often form the truest judgments of us. The two sexes seem placed as spies upon each other, and are furnished with different abilities, adapted for mutual inspection.

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CHAPTER IX.

Two Ladies of great distinction introduced.—Superiour finery ever seems to confer superiour breeding.

Mr Burchell had scarcely taken leave, and Sophia consented to dance with the chaplain, when my little ones came running out to tell us, that the 'Squire was come with a crowd of company. Upon our return, we found our landlord, with a couple of under gentlemen and two young ladies richly dressed, whom he introduced as women of very great distinction and fashion from town. We happened not to have chairs enough for the whole company: but Mr Thornhill immediately proposed, that every gentleman should sit in a lady's lap. This I positively objected to, notwithstanding a look of disapprobation from my wife. Moses was therefore dispatched to borrow a couple of chairs; and as we were in want of ladies to make up a set at country dances, the two gentlemen went with him in quest of a couple of partners. Chairs and partners were soon provided. The gentlemen returned with my neighbour Flamborough's rosy daughters, flaunting with red top-knots; but an unlucky circumstance was not adverted to—though the Miss Flamboroughs were reckoned the very best dancers in the parish, and understood the jig and round-about to perfection, yet they were totally unacquainted with country dances. This at first discomposed us: however, after a little shoving and dragging, they at

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last went merrily on. Our music consisted of two fiddles, with a pipe and tabor. The moon shone bright, Mr Thornhill and my eldest daughter led up the ball, to the great delight of the spectators; for the neighbours, hearing what was going forward, came flocking about us. My girl moved with so much grace and vivacity, that my wife could not avoid discovering the pride of her heart, by assuring me, that though the little chit did it so cleverly, all the steps were stolen from herself. The ladies of the town strove hard to be equally easy, but without success. They swam, sprawled, languished, and frisked; but all would not do: the gazers indeed owned that it was fine; but neighbour Flamborough observed, that Miss Livy's feet seemed as pat to the music as its echo. After the dance had continued about an hour, the two ladies, who were apprehensive of catching cold, moved to break up the ball. One of them, I thought, expressed her sentiments upon this occasion in a very coarse manner, when she observed, that by *the living jingo she was all of a muck of sweat.* Upon our return to the house, we found a very elegant cold supper, which Mr Thornhill had ordered to be brought with him. The conversation at this time was more reserved than before. The two ladies threw my girls quite into the shade; for they would talk of nothing but high life, and high-lived company; with other fashionable topics, such as pictures, taste, Shakspeare, and the musical glasses. 'Tis true they once or twice mortified us sensibly by slipping out an oath; but that appeared to me as the surest symptom of their distinction (though I am since informed that swearing is perfectly unfashionable). Their finery, however, threw a veil over any grossness in their conversation. My daughters seemed to regard their superiour accomplishments with envy; and what appeared

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amiss was ascribed to tip-top quality breeding. But the condescension of the ladies was still superiour to their other accomplishments. One of them observed, that had Miss Olivia seen a little more of the world, it would greatly improve her. To which the other added, that a single winter in town would make her little Sophia quite another thing. My wife warmly assented to both; adding, that there was nothing she more ardently wished than to give her girls a single winter's polishing. To this I could not help replying, that their breeding was already superiour to their fortune; and that greater refinement would only serve to make their poverty ridiculous, and give them a taste for pleasures they had no right to possess.—« And what pleasures, » cried Mr Thornhill, « do they not deserve to possess, who have so much in their power to bestow? As for my part, » continued he, « my fortune is pretty large; love, liberty, and pleasure, are my maxims; but curse me if a settlement of half my estate could give my charming Olivia pleasure, it should be hers; and the only favour I would ask in return would be to add myself to the benefit. » I was not such a stranger to the world as to be ignorant that this was the fashionable cant to disguise the insolence of the basest proposal; but I made an effort to suppress my resentment. « Sir, » cried I, « the family which you now condescend to favour with your company, has been bred with as nice a sense of honour as you. Any attempts to injure that, may be attended with very dangerous consequences. Honour, sir, is our only possession at present, and of that last treasure we must be particularly careful. »—I was soon sorry for the warmth with which I had spoken this, when the young gentleman, grasping my hand, swore he commended my spirit, though he disapproved my suspicions. « As to your

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present hint,» continued he, « I protest nothing was farther from my heart than such a thought. No, by all that's tempting, the virtue that will stand a regular siege was never to my taste; for all my amours are carried by a *coup-de-main.*»

The two ladies, who affected to be ignorant of the rest, seemed highly displeased with this last stroke of freedom, and began a very discreet and serious dialogue upon virtue; in this my wife, the chaplain, and I, soon joined; and the 'Squire himself was at last brought to confess a sense of sorrow for his former excesses. We talked of the pleasures of temperance, and of the sunshine in the mind unpolluted with guilt. I was so well pleased, that my little ones were kept up beyond the usual time to be edified by so much good conversation. Mr Thornhill even went beyond me, and demanded if I had any objection to giving prayers. I joyfully embraced the proposal; and in this manner the night was passed in a most comfortable way, till at last the company began to think of returning. The ladies seemed very unwilling to part with my daughters, for whom they had conceived a particular affection, and joined in a request to have the pleasure of their company home. The 'Squire seconded the proposal, and my wife added her entreaties; the girls too looked upon me as if they wished to go. In this perplexity I made two or three excuses, which my daughters as readily removed; so that at last I was obliged to give a peremptory refusal; for which we had nothing but sullen looks and short answers the whole day ensuing.

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CHAPTER X.

The Family endeavours to cope with their Betters.—The miseries of the poor when they attempt to appear above their circumstances.

I NOW began to find, that all my long and painful lectures upon temperance, simplicity, and contentment, were entirely disregarded. The distinctions lately paid us by our betters awaked that pride which I had laid asleep, but not removed. Our windows, again, as formerly, were filled with washes for the neck and face. The sun was dreaded as an enemy to the skin without doors, and the fire as a spoiler of the complexion within. My wife observed, that rising too early would hurt her daughters' eyes, that working after dinner would redden their noses, and she convinced me that the hands never looked so white as when they did nothing. Instead therefore of finishing George's shirts, we now had them new-modelling their old gauzes, or flourishing upon catgut. The poor Miss Flamboroughs, their former gay companions, were cast off as mean acquaintance, and the whole conversation ran upon high life and high-lived company, with pictures, taste, Shakspeare, and the musical glasses.

But we could have borne all this, had not a fortune-telling gipsy come to raise us into perfect sublimity. The tawny sibyl no sooner appeared, than my girls came running to me for a shilling a-piece to cross her hand with silver.

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To say the truth, I was tired of being always wise, and could not help gratifying their request, because I loved to see them happy. I gave each of them a shilling; though for the honour of the family it must be observed, that they never went without money themselves, as my wife always generously let them have a guinea each, to keep in their pockets, but with strict injunctions never to change it. After they had been closeted up with the fortune-teller for some time, I knew by their looks, upon their returning, that they had been promised something great.—« Well, my girls, how have you sped? Tell me, Livy, has the fortune-teller given thee a pennyworth?» — « I protest, papa,» says the girl, « I believe she deals with somebody that's not right; for she positively declared, that I am to be married to a 'squire in less than a twelvemonth!» — « Well, now Sophy, my child,» said I, « and what sort of a husband are you to have?» « Sir,» replied she, « I am to have a lord soon after my sister has married the 'squire.» « How!» cried I, « is that all you are to have for your two shillings? Only a lord and a 'squire for two shillings! You fools, I could have promised you a prince and a nabob for half the money.»

This curiosity of theirs, however, was attended with very serious effects: we now began to think ourselves designed by the stars to something exalted, and already anticipated our future grandeur.

It has been a thousand times observed, and I must observe it once more, that the hours we pass with happy prospects in view, are more pleasing than those crowned with fruition. In the first case, we cook the dish to our own appetite; in the latter, nature cooks it for us. It is impossible to repeat the train of agreeable reveries we called up for our entertainment. We looked upon our

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fortunes as once more rising; and as the whole parish asserted that the 'Squire was in love with my daughter, she was actually so with him; for they persuaded her into the passion. In this agreeable interval, my wife had the most lucky dreams in the world, which she took care to tell us every morning with great solemnity and exactness. It was one night a coffin and cross-bones, the sign of an approaching wedding; at another time she imagined her daughters' pockets filled with farthings, a certain sign of their being shortly stuffed with gold. The girls themselves had their omens. They felt strange kisses on their lips; they saw rings in the candle, purses bounced from the fire, and true love-knots lurked in the bottom of every tea-cup.

Towards the end of the week we received a card from the town ladies; in which, with their compliments, they hoped to see all our family at church the Sunday following. All Saturday morning I could perceive, in consequence of this, my wife and daughters in close conference together, and now and then glancing at me with looks that betrayed a latent plot. To be sincere, I had strong suspicions that some absurd proposal was preparing for appearing with splendour the next day. In the evening they began their operations in a very regular manner, and my wife undertook to conduct the siege. After tea, when I seemed in spirits, she began thus :—« I fancy, Charles, my dear, we shall have a great deal of good company at our church to-morrow.» — « Perhaps we may, my dear,» returned I, « though you need be under no uneasiness about that, you shall have a sermon whether there be or not.»—« That is what I expect,» returned she; « but I think, my dear, we ought to appear there as decently as possible, for who knows what may happen?» « Your precautions,» replied I, « are

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highly commendable. A decent behaviour and appearance in church is what charms me. We should be devout and humble, cheerful and serene.» — « Yes,» cried she, « I know that; but I mean we should go there in as proper a manner as possible; not altogether like the scrubs about us.» « You are quite right, my dear,» returned I, « and I was going to make the very same proposal. The proper manner of going is, to go there as early as possible, to have time for meditation before the service begins.» — « Phoo, Charles,» interrupted she, « all that is very true; but not what I would be at. I mean, we should go there genteelly. You know the church is two miles off, and I protest I don't like to see my daughters trudging up to their pew all blowzed and red with walking, and looking for all the world as if they had been winners at a smock-race. Now, my dear, my proposal is this: there are our two plough horses, the colt that has been in our family these nine years, and his companion Blackberry, that has scarcely done an earthly thing for this month past. They are both grown fat and lazy. Why should not they do something as well as we? And let me tell you, when Moses has trimmed them a little, they will cut a very tolerable figure.»

To this proposal I objected, that walking would be twenty times more genteel than such a paltry conveyance, as Blackberry was wall-eyed, and the colt wanted a tail: that they had never been broke to the rein, but had a hundred vicious tricks; and that we had but one saddle and pillion in the whole house. All these objections, however, were overruled; so that I was obliged to comply. The next morning I perceived them not a little busy in collecting such materials as might be necessary for the expedition; but as I found it would be a business of time, I walked on

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to the church before, and they promised speedily to follow. I waited near an hour in the reading-desk for their arrival; but not finding them come as expected, I was obliged to begin, and went through the service, not without some uneasiness at finding them absent. This was increased when all was finished, and no appearance of the family. I therefore walked back by the horse-way, which was five miles round, though the foot-way was but two, and when got about half way home, perceived the procession marching slowly forward towards the church; my son, my wife, and the two little ones, exalted on one horse, and my two daughters upon the other. I demanded the cause of their delay; but I soon found by their looks they had met with a thousand misfortunes on the road. The horses had at first refused to move from the door, till Mr Burchell was kind enough to beat them forward for about two hundred yards with his cudgel. Next, the straps of my wife's pillion broke down, and they were obliged to stop to repair them before they could proceed. After that, one of the horses took it into his head to stand still, and neither blows nor entreaties could prevail with him to proceed. He was just recovering from this dismal situation when I found them; but perceiving every thing safe, I own their present mortification did not much displease me, as it would give me many opportunities of future triumph, and teach my daughters more humility.

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CHAPTER XI.

The Family still resolve to hold up their heads.

MICHAELMAS eve happening on the next day, we were invited to burn nuts and play tricks at neighbour Flamborough's. Our late mortifications had humbled us a little, or it is probable we might have rejected such an invitation with contempt: however, we suffered ourselves to be happy. Our honest neighbour's goose and dumplings were fine, and the lamb's wool, even in the opinion of my wife, who was a *connoisseur*, was excellent. It is true, his manner of telling stories was not quite so well. They were very long, and very dull, and all about himself, and we had laughed at them ten times before: however, we were kind enough to laugh at them once more.

Mr Burchell, who was of the party, was always fond of seeing some innocent amusement going forward, and set the boys and girls to blind man's buff. My wife too was persuaded to join in the diversion, and it gave me pleasure to think she was not yet too old. In the mean time, my neighbour and I looked on, laughed at every feat, and praised our own dexterity when we were young. Hot cockles succeeded next, questions and commands followed that, and last of all, they sat down to hunt the slipper. As every person may not be acquainted with this primeval pastime, it may be necessary to observe, that the company

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at this play plant themselves in a ring upon the ground, all, except one who stands in the middle, whose business it is to catch a shoe, which the company shove about under their hams from one to another, something like a weaver's shuttle. As it is impossible, in this case, for the lady who is up to face all the company at once, the great beauty of the play lies in hitting her a thump with the heel of the shoe on that side least capable of making a defence. It was in this manner that my eldest daughter was hemmed in, and thumped about, all blowzed, in spirits, and bawling for fair play, fair play, with a voice that might deafen a ballad-singer, when, confusion on confusion! who should enter the room but our two great acquaintances from town, Lady Blarney and Miss Carolina Wilhelmina Amelia Skeggs! —Description would but beggar, therefore it is unnecessary to describe this new mortification. Death! to be seen by ladies of such high breeding in such vulgar attitudes! Nothing better could ensue from such a vulgar play of Mr Flamborough's proposing. We seemed stuck to the ground for some time, as if actually petrified with amazement.

The two ladies had been at our house to see us, and finding us from home, came after us hither, as they were uneasy to know what accident could have kept us from church the day before. Olivia undertook to be our prolocutor, and delivered the whole in a summary way, only saying, « We were thrown from our horses. » At which account the ladies were greatly concerned; but being told the family received no hurt, they were extremely glad: but being informed that we were almost killed by the fright, they were vastly sorry; but hearing that we had a very good night, they were extremely glad again. Nothing could exceed their complaisance to my daughters: their

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professions the last evening were warm, but now they were ardent. They protested a desire of having a more lasting acquaintance. Lady Blarney was particularly attached to Olivia; Miss Carolina Wilhelmina Amelia Skeggs (I love to give the whole name) took a greater fancy to her sister. They supported the conversation between themselves, while my daughters sat silent, admiring their exalted breeding. But as every reader, however beggarly himself, is fond of high-lived dialogues, with anecdotes of Lords, Ladies, and Knights of the Garter, I must beg leave to give him the concluding part of the present conversation.

«All that I know of the matter,» cried Miss Skeggs, «is this, that it may be true, or it may not be true: but this I can assure your ladyship, that the whole rout was in amaze; his lordship turned all manner of colours, my lady fell into a *sound*, but Sir Tomkyn, drawing his sword, swore he was hers to the last drop of his blood.»

«Well,» replied our peeress, «this I can say, that the duchess never told me a syllable of the matter, and I believe her grace would keep nothing a secret from me. This you may depend upon as fact, that the next morning my lord duke cried out three times to his *valet de chambre*, Jernigan, Jernigan, Jernigan, bring me my garters.»

But previously I should have mentioned the very impolite behaviour of Mr Burchell, who, during this discourse, sat with his face turned to the fire, and at the conclusion of every sentence would cry out *fudge!* an expression which displeased us all, and in some measure damped the rising spirit of the conversation.

«Besides, my dear Skeggs,» continued our peeress, «there is nothing of this in the copy of verses that Dr Burdock made upon the occasion.» *Fudge!*

«I am surprised at that,» cried Miss Skeggs; «for he

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seldom leaves any thing out, as he writes only for his own amusement. But can your ladyship favour me with a sight of them?» *Fudge!*

« My dear creature,» replied our peeress, « do you think I carry such things about me? Though they are very fine to be sure, and I think myself something of a judge; at least I know what pleases myself. Indeed I was ever an admirer of all Dr Burdock's little pieces; for, except what he does, and our dear countess at Hanover-Square, there's nothing comes out but the most lowest stuff in nature; not a bit of high life among them.» *Fudge!*

« Your Ladyship should except,» says t'other, « your own things in the Lady's Magazine. I hope you'll say there's nothing low-lived there? But I suppose we are to have no more from that quarter?» *Fudge!*

« Why, my dear,» says the lady, « you know my reader and companion has left me, to be married to Captain Roach, and as my poor eyes won't suffer me to write myself, I have been for some time looking out for another. A proper person is no easy matter to find, and to be sure thirty pounds a-year is a small stipend for a well-bred girl of character, that can read, write, and behave in company: as for the chits about town, there is no bearing them about one.» *Fudge!*

« That I know,» cried Miss Skeggs, « by experience. For of the three companions I had this last half-year, one of them refused to do plain-work an hour in a day; another thought twenty-five guineas a-year too small a salary, and I was obliged to send away the third, because I suspected an intrigue with the chaplain. Virtue, my dear Lady Blarney, virtue is worth any price; but where is that to be found?» *Fudge!*

My wife had been for a long time all attention to this

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discourse; but was particularly struck with the latter part of it. Thirty pounds and twenty-five guineas a-year, made fifty-six pounds five shillings English money, all which was in a manner going a-begging, and might easily be secured in the family. She for a moment studied my looks for approbation; and, to own a truth, I was of opinion, that two such places would fit our two daughters exactly. Besides, if the 'Squire had any real affection for my eldest daughter, this would be the way to make her every way qualified for her fortune. My wife therefore was resolved that we should not be deprived of such advantages for want of assurance, and undertook to harangue for the family. « I hope, » cried she, « your ladyships will pardon my present presumption. It is true, we have no right to pretend to such favours; but yet it is natural for me to wish putting my children forward in the world. And I will be bold to say my two girls have had a pretty good education and capacity, at least the country can't show better. They can read, write, and cast accounts; they understand their needle, broadstitch, cross and change, and all manner of plain-work; they can pink, point, and frill, and know something of music; they can do up small clothes; work upon catgut: my eldest can cut paper, and my youngest has a very pretty manner of telling fortunes upon the cards. » *Fudge!*

When she had delivered this pretty piece of eloquence, the two ladies looked at each other a few minutes in silence, with an air of doubt and importance. At last Miss Carolina Wilhelmina Amelia Skeggs condescended to observe, that the young ladies, from the opinion she could form of them from so slight an acquaintance, seemed very fit for such employments: « But a thing of this kind, madam, » cried she, addressing my spouse, « requires a

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thorough examination into characters, and a more perfect knowledge of each other. Not, madam,» continued she, « that I in the least suspect the young ladies' virtue, prudence, and discretion; but there is a form in these things, madam, there is a form.»

My wife approved her suspicions very much, observing that she was very apt to be suspicious herself; but referred her to all the neighbours for a character: but this our peeress declared as unnecessary, alleging that her cousin Thornhill's recommendation would be sufficient; and upon this we rested our petition.

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CHAPTER XII.

Fortune seems resolved to humble the Family of Wa[redacted]eld.—Mortifications are often more painful than real calamities.

When we were returned home, the night was dedicated to schemes of future conquest. Deborah exerted much sagacity in conjecturing which of the two girls was likely to have the best place, and most opportunities of seeing good company. The only obstacle to our preferment was in obtaining the 'Squire's recommendation; but he had already shown us too many instances of his friendship to doubt of it now. Even in bed my wife kept up the usual theme: « Well, faith, my dear Charles, between ourselves, I think we have made an excellent day's work of it.»— « Pretty well,» cried I, not knowing what to say.—« What! only pretty well!» returned she. « I think it is very well. Suppose the girls should come to make acquaintances of taste in town! This I am assured of, that London is the only place in the world for all manner of husbands. Besides, my dear, stranger things happen every day: and as ladies of quality are so taken with my daughters, what will not men of quality be?—*Entre nous,* I protest I like my Lady Blarney vastly, so very obliging. However, Miss Carolina Wilhelmina Amelia Skeggs has my warm heart. But yet, when they came to talk of places in town, you saw at once how I nailed them. Tell me, my dear, don't

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you think I did for my children there?»—« Ay,» returned I, not knowing well what to think of the matter, « Heaven grant they may be both the better for it this day three months!» This was one of those observations I usually made to impress my wife with an opinion of my sagacity: for if the girls succeeded, then it was a pious wish fulfilled; but if any thing unfortunate ensued, then it might be looked upon as a prophecy. All this conversation, however, was only preparatory to another scheme, and indeed I dreaded as much. This was nothing less than that, as we were now to hold up our heads a little higher in the world, it would be proper to sell the colt, which was grown old, at a neighbouring fair, and buy us a horse that would carry single or double upon an occasion, and make a pretty appearance at church, or upon a visit. This at first I opposed stoutly; but it was as stoutly defended. However, as I weakened, my antagonists gained strength, till at last it was resolved to part with him.

As the fair happened on the following day, I had intentions of going myself; but my wife persuaded me that I had got a cold, and nothing could prevail upon her to permit me from home. « No, my dear,» said she, « our son Moses is a discreet boy, and can buy and sell to very good advantage: you know all our great bargains are of his purchasing. He always stands out and higgles, and actually tires them till he gets a bargain.»

As I had some opinion of my son's prudence, I was willing enough to intrust him with this commission; and the next morning I perceived his sisters mighty busy in fitting out Moses for the fair; trimming his hair, brushing his buckles, and cocking his hat with pins. The business of the toilet being over, we had at last the satisfaction of seeing him mounted upon the colt, with a deal box before

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him to bring home groceries in. He had on a coat made of that cloth they called thunder and lightning, which, though grown too short, was much too good to be thrown away. His waistcoat was of gosling green, and his sisters had tied his hair with a broad black riband. We all followed him several paces from the door, bawling after him *good luck, good luck,* till we could see him no longer.

He was scarcely gone, when Mr Thornhill's butler came to congratulate us upon our good fortune, saying, that he overheard his young master mention our names with great commendation.

Good fortune seemed resolved not to come alone. Another footman from the same family followed, with a card for my daughters, importing, that the two ladies had received such pleasing accounts from Mr Thornhill of us all, that, after a few previous inquiries, they hoped to be perfectly satisfied. « Ay,» cried my wife, « I now see it is no easy matter to get into the families of the great; but when one once gets in, then, as Moses says, one may go to sleep.» To this piece of humour, for she intended it for wit, my daughters assented with a loud laugh of pleasure. In short, such was her satisfaction at this message, that she actually put her hand in her pocket, and gave the messenger sevenpence halfpenny.

This was to be our visiting day. The next that came was Mr Burchell, who had been at the fair. He brought my little ones a pennyworth of gingerbread each, which my wife undertook to keep for them, and give them by letters at a time. He brought my daughters also a couple of boxes, in which they might keep wafers, snuff, patches, or even money, when they got it. My wife was usually fond of a weasel-skin purse, as being the most lucky; but this by the by. We had still a regard for Mr Burchell,

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though his late rude behaviour was in some measure displeasing; nor could we now avoid communicating our happiness to him, and asking his advice: although we seldom followed advice, we were all ready enough to ask it. When he read the note from the two ladies, he shook his head, and observed, that an affair of this sort demanded the utmost circumspection.—This air of diffidence highly displeased my wife. «I never doubted, sir,» cried she, «your readiness to be against my daughters and me. You have more circumspection than is wanted. However, I fancy when we come to ask advice, we will apply to persons who seem to have made use of it themselves.»—«Whatever my own conduct may have been, madam,» replied he, «is not the present question; though as I have made no use of advice myself, I should in conscience give it to those that will.»—As I was apprehensive this answer might draw on a repartee, making up by abuse what it wanted in wit, I changed the subject, by seeming to wonder what could keep our son so long at the fair, as it was now almost night-fall.—«Never mind our, son» cried my wife, «depend upon it he knows what he is about. I'll warrant we'll never see him sell his hen of a rainy day. I have seen him buy such bargains as would amaze one. I'll tell you a good story about that, that will make you split your sides with laughing.—But as I live, yonder comes Moses, without a horse, and the box at his back.»

As she spoke, Moses came slowly on foot, and sweating under the deal box, which he had strapped round his shoulders like a pedler.—«Welcome, welcome, Moses: well, my boy, what have you brought us from the fair?»—«I have brought you myself,» cried Moses, with a sly look, and resting the box on the dresser.—«Ah, Moses,» cried my wife, «that we know; but where is the horse?»

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«I have sold him,» cried Moses, «for three pounds five shillings and twopence.»—«Well done, my good boy,» returned she; «I knew you would touch them off. Between ourselves, three pounds five shillings and twopence is no bad day's work. Come let us have it then.»—«I have brought back no money,» cried Moses again. «I have laid it all out in a bargain, and here it is,» pulling out a bundle from his breast: «here they are; a gross of green spectacles, with silver rims and shagreen cases.»—«A gross of green spectacles!» repeated my wife in a faint voice. «And you have parted with the colt, and brought us back nothing but a gross of green paltry spectacles!»—«Dear mother,» cried the boy, «why won't you listen to reason? I had them a dead bargain, or I should not have bought them. The silver rims alone will sell for double the money.»—«A fig for the silver rims,» cried my wife in a passion: «I dare swear they won't sell for above half the money at the rate of broken silver, five shillings an ounce.» —«You need be under no uneasiness,» cried I, «about selling the rims, for they are not worth sixpence; for I perceive they are only copper varnished over.»—«What,» cried my wife, «not silver! the rims not silver!» «No,» cried I, «no more silver than your saucepan.»—«And so,» returned she, «we have parted with the colt, and have only got a gross of green spectacles, with copper rims and shagreen cases! A murrain take such trumpery. The blockhead has been imposed upon, and should have known his company better.»—«There, my dear,» cried I, «you are wrong, he should not have known them at all.» —«Marry, hang the idiot,» returned she, «to bring me such stuff; if I had them I would throw them in the fire.» «There again you are wrong, my dear,» cried I; «for

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though they be copper, we will keep them by us, as copper spectacles, you know, are better than nothing.»

By this time the unfortunate Moses was undeceived. He now saw that he had been imposed upon by a prowling sharper, who, observing his figure, had marked him for an easy prey. I therefore asked the circumstances of his deception. He sold the horse, it seems, and walked the fair in search of another. A reverend looking man brought him to a tent, under pretence of having one to sell. « Here,» continued Moses, « we met another man, very well dressed, who desired to borrow twenty pounds upon these, saying that he wanted money, and would dispose of them for a third of the value. The first gentleman, who pretended to be my friend, whispered me to buy them, and cautioned me not to let so good an offer pass. I sent for Mr Flamborough, and they talked him up as finely as they did me, and so at last we were persuaded to buy the two gross between us.»

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CHAPTER XIII.

Mr Burchell is found to be an enemy; for he has the confidence to give disagreeable advice.

Our family had now made several attempts to be fine; but some unforeseen disaster demolished each as soon as projected. I endeavoured to take the advantage of every disappointment, to improve their good sense in proportion as they were frustrated in ambition. «You see, my children,» cried I, «how little is to be got by attempts to impose upon the world, in coping with our betters. Such as are poor, and will associate with none but the rich, are hated by those they avoid, and despised by those they follow. Unequal combinations are always disadvantageous to the weaker side: the rich having the pleasure, and the poor the inconveniencies that result from them. But come, Dick, my boy, and repeat the fable that you were reading to-day, for the good of the company.»

«Once upon a time,» cried the child, «a Giant and a Dwarf were friends, and kept together. They made a bargain that they would never forsake each other, but go seek adventures. The first battle they fought was with two Saracens, and the Dwarf, who was very courageous, dealt one of the champions a most angry blow. It did the Saracen very little injury, who, lifting up his sword, fairly struck off the poor Dwarf's arm. He was now in a woful

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plight; but the Giant coming to his assistance, in a short time left the two Saracens dead on the plain, and the Dwarf cut off the dead man's head out of spite. They then travelled on to another adventure. This was against three bloody-minded Satyrs, who were carrying away a damsel in distress. The Dwarf was not quite so fierce now as before; but for all that struck the first blow, which was returned by another, that knocked out his eye; but the Giant was soon up with them, and had they not fled, would certainly have killed them every one. They were all very joyful for this victory, and the damsel who was relieved fell in love with the Giant, and married him. They now travelled far, and farther than I can tell, till they met with a company of robbers. The Giant, for the first time, was foremost now; but the Dwarf was not far behind. The battle was stout and long. Wherever the Giant came, all fell before him; but the Dwarf had like to have been killed more than once. At last the victory declared for the two adventurers; but the Dwarf lost his leg. The Dwarf was now without an arm, a leg, and an eye, while the Giant was without a single wound. Upon which he cried out to his little companion, My little hero, this is glorious sport! let us get one victory more, and then we shall have honour for ever. No, cries the Dwarf, who was by this time grown wiser, no, I declare off; I 'll fight no more: for I find in every battle that you get all the honour and rewards, but all the blows fall upon me.»

I was going to moralize this fable, when our attention was called off to a warm dispute between my wife and Mr Burchell, upon my daughters' intended expedition to town. My wife very strenuously insisted upon the advantages that would result from it; Mr Burchell, on the contrary, dissuaded her with great ardour, and I stood neuter.

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His present dissuasions seemed but the second part of those which were received with so ill a grace in the morning. The dispute grew high, while poor Deborah, instead of reasoning stronger, talked louder, and at last was obliged to take shelter from a defeat in clamour. The conclusion of her harangue, however, was highly displeasing to us all: she knew, she said, of some who had their own secret reasons for what they advised; but, for her part, she wished such to stay away from her house for the future. —« Madam,» cried Burchell, with looks of great composure, which tended to inflame her the more, « as for secret reasons, you are right: I have secret reasons, which I forbear to mention, because you are not able to answer those of which I make no secret: but I find my visits here are become troublesome; I'll take my leave therefore now, and perhaps come once more to take a final farewell when I am quitting the country.» Thus saying, he took up his hat, nor could the attempts of Sophia, whose looks seemed to upbraid his precipitancy, prevent his going.

When gone, we all regarded each other for some minutes with confusion. My wife, who knew herself to be the cause, strove to hide her concern with a forced smile, and an air of assurance, which I was willing to reprove: « How, woman,» cried I to her, « is it thus we treat strangers? Is it thus we return their kindness? Be assured, my dear, that these were the harshest words, and to me the most unpleasing that ever escaped your lips!»—« Why would he provoke me then?» replied she; « but I know the motives of his advice perfectly well. He would prevent my girls from going to town, that he may have the pleasure of my youngest daughter's company here at home. But whatever happens, she shall choose better company than such low-lived fellows as he.»—« Low-lived, my dear, do you

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call him?» cried I; «it is very possible we may mistake this man's character, for he seems upon some occasions the most finished gentleman I ever knew.—Tell me, Sophia, my girl, has he ever given you any secret instances of his attachment?»—«His conversation with me, sir,» replied my daughter, «has ever been sensible, modest, and pleasing. As to aught else, no, never. Once, indeed, I remember to have heard him say, he never knew a woman who could find merit in a man that seemed poor.» «Such, my dear,» cried I, «is the common cant of all the unfortunate or idle. But I hope you have been taught to judge properly of such men, and that it would be even madness to expect happiness from one who has been so very bad an economist of his own. Your mother and I have now better prospects for you. The next winter, which you will probably spend in town, will give you opportunities of making a more prudent choice.»

What Sophia's reflections were upon this occasion I can't pretend to determine; but I was not displeased at the bottom, that we were rid of a guest from whom I had much to fear. Our breach of hospitality went to my conscience a little; but I quickly silenced that monitor by two or three specious reasons, which served to satisfy and reconcile me to myself. The pain which conscience gives the man who has already done wrong, is soon got over. Conscience is a coward, and those faults it has not strength enough to prevent, it seldom has justice enough to accuse.

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CHAPTER XIV.

Fresh Mortifications or a demonstration that seeming Calamities may be real Blessings.

THE journey of my daughters to town was now resolved upon, Mr Thornhill having kindly promised to inspect their conduct himself, and inform us by letter of their behaviour. But it was thought indispensably necessary that their appearance should equal the greatness of their expectations, which could not be done without expense. We debated therefore in full council what were the easiest methods of raising money, or more properly speaking, what we could most conveniently sell. The deliberation was soon finished; it was found that our remaining horse was utterly useless for the plough, without his companion, and equally unfit for the road, as wanting an eye; it was therefore determined that we should dispose of him for the purposes above mentioned, at the neighbouring fair, and, to prevent imposition, that I should go with him myself. Though this was one of the first mercantile transactions of my life, yet I had no doubt about acquitting myself with reputation. The opinion a man forms of his own prudence is measured by that of the company he keeps; and as mine was mostly in the family way, I had conceived no unfavourable sentiments of my worldly wisdom. My wife, however, next morning, at parting, after I had got some paces from the door, called me back, to advise me, in a whisper, to have all my eyes about me.

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I had, in the usual forms, when I came to the fair, put my horse through all his paces; but for some time had no bidders. At last a chapman approached, and after he had for a good while examined the horse round, finding him blind of one eye, he would have nothing to say to him: a second came up, but observing he had a spavin, declared he would not take him for the driving home: a third perceived he had a windgall, and would bid no money: a fourth knew by his eye that he had the botts: a fifth wondered what a plague I could do at the fair with a blind, spavined, galled hack, that was only fit to be cut up for a dog-kennel. By this time I began to have a most hearty contempt for the poor animal myself, and was almost ashamed at the approach of every customer; for though I did not entirely believe all the fellows told me, yet I reflected that the number of witnesses was a strong presumption they were right; and St Gregory, upon Good Works, professes himself to be of the same opinion.

I was in this mortifying situation, when a brother clergyman, an old acquaintance, who had also business at the fair, came up, and shaking me by the hand, proposed adjourning to a public-house, and taking a glass of whatever we could get. I readily closed with the offer, and entering an alehouse, we were shown into a little back room, where there was only a venerable old man, who sat wholly intent over a large book, which he was reading. I never in my life saw a figure that prepossessed me more favourably. His locks of silver gray venerably shaded his temples, and his green old age seemed to be the result of health and benevolence. However, his presence did not interrupt our conversation: my friend and I discoursed on the various turns of fortune we had met; the Whistonian controversy, my last pamphlet, the

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archdeacon's reply, and the hard measure that was dealt me. But our attention was in a short time taken off by the appearance of a youth, who, entering the room, respectfully said something softly to the old stranger. « Make no apologies, my child, » said the old man, « to do good is a duty we owe to all our fellow-creatures : take this, I wish it were more ; but five pounds will relieve your distress, and you are welcome. » The modest youth shed tears of gratitude, and yet his gratitude was scarcely equal to mine. I could have hugged the good old man in my arms, his benevolence pleased me so. He continued to read, and we resumed our conversation, until my companion, after some time, recollecting that he had business to transact in the fair, promised to be soon back ; adding, that he always desired to have as much of Dr Primrose's company as possible. The old gentleman hearing my name mentioned, seemed to look at me with attention for some time, and when my friend was gone, most respectfully demanded if I was any way related to the great Primrose, that courageous monogamist, who had been the bulwark of the church. Never did my heart feel sincerer rapture than at that moment. « Sir, » cried I, « the applause of so good a man, as I am sure you are, adds to that happiness in my breast which your benevolence has already excited. You behold before you, sir, that Dr Primrose, the monogamist, whom you have been pleased to call great. You here see that unfortunate divine, who has so long, and it would ill become me to say successfully, fought against the deuterogamy of the age. »—« Sir, » cried the stranger, struck with awe, « I fear I have been too familiar ; but you 'll forgive my curiosity, sir : I beg pardon. »—« Sir, » cried I, grasping his hand, « you are so far from displeasing me by your familiarity, that I must beg you 'll accept my friendship, as you already

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have my esteem.»—« Then with gratitude I accept the offer,» cried he, squeezing me by the hand, « thou glorious pillar of unshaken orthodoxy! and do I behold—» I here interrupted what he was going to say; for though, as an author, I could digest no small share of flattery, yet now my modesty would permit no more. However, no lovers in romance ever cemented a more instantaneous friendship. We talked upon several subjects: at first I thought he seemed rather devout than learned, and began to think he despised all human doctrines as dross. Yet this no way lessened him in my esteem; for I had for some time begun privately to harbour such an opinion myself. I therefore took occasion to observe, that the world in general began to be blamably indifferent as to doctrinal matters, and followed human speculations too much.—« Ay, sir,» replied he, as if he had reserved all his learning to that moment, « ay, sir, the world is in its dotage, and yet the cosmogony or creation of the world has puzzled philosophers of all ages. What a medley of opinions have they not broached upon the creation of the world! Sanchoniathon, Manetho, Berosus, and Ocellus Lucanus, have all attempted it in vain. The latter has these words, *Anarchon ara kai atelutaion to pan*, which imply that all things have neither beginning nor end. Manetho also, who lived about the time of Nebuchadon-Asser,—Asser being a Syriac word usually applied as a surname to the kings of that country, as Teglat Phael-Asser, Nabon-Asser,—he, I say, formed a conjecture equally absurd; for as we usually say, *ek to biblion kubernetes*, which implies that books will never teach the world; so he attempted to investigate——But, sir, I ask pardon, I am straying from the question.»—That he actually was; nor could I for my life see how the creation of the world had any thing to do with the business I was talking of; but

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it was sufficient to show me that he was a man of letters, and I now reverenced him the more. I was resolved therefore to bring him to the touchstone; but he was too mild and too gentle to contend for victory. Whenever I made an observation that looked like a challenge to controversy, he would smile, shake his head, and say nothing; by which, I understood he could say much, if he thought proper. The subject therefore insensibly changed from the business of antiquity to that which brought us both to the fair: mine, I told him, was to sell a horse, and very luckily indeed, his was to buy one for one of his tenants. My horse was soon produced, and in fine we struck a bargain. Nothing now remained but to pay me, and he accordingly pulled out a thirty pound note, and bid me change it. Not being in a capacity of complying with this demand, he ordered his footman to be called up, who made his appearance in a very genteel livery. « Here, Abraham, » cried he, « go and get gold for this; you 'll do it at neighbour Jackson's, or any where. » While the fellow was gone, he entertained me with a pathetic harangue on the great scarcity of silver, which I undertook to improve, by deploring also the great scarcity of gold; so that by the time Abraham returned, we had both agreed that money was never so hard to be come at as now. Abraham returned to inform us, that he had been over the whole fair, and could not get change, though he had offered half a crown for doing it. This was a very great disappointment to us all; but the old gentleman, having paused a little, asked me if I knew one Solomon Flamborough in my part of the country? Upon replying that he was my next-door neighbour; « If that be the case then, » returned he, « I believe we shall deal. You shall have a draft upon him, payable at sight; and let me tell you, he is as warm a man as any within five miles round him. Ho-

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nest Solomon and I have been acquainted for many years together. I remember I always beat him at three jumps; but he could hop on one leg farther than I.» A draft upon my neighbour was to me the same as money; for I was sufficiently convinced of his ability. The draft was signed, and put into my hands, and Mr Jenkinson, the old gentleman, his man Abraham, and my horse, old Blackberry, trotted off very well pleased with each other.

After a short interval, being left to reflection, I began to recollect that I had done wrong in taking a draft from a stranger, and so prudently resolved upon following the purchaser, and having back my horse. But this was now too late; I therefore made directly homewards, resolving to get the draft changed into money at my friend's as fast as possible. I found my honest neighbour smoking his pipe at his own door, and informing him that I had a small bill upon him, he read it twice over. « You can read the name, I suppose,» cried I, « Ephraim Jenkinson.» « Yes,» returned he, « the name is written plain enough, and I know the gentleman too, the greatest rascal under the canopy of heaven. This is the very same rogue who sold us the spectacles. Was he not a venerable looking man, with gray hair, and no flaps to his pocket-holes? And did he not talk a long string of learning about Greek, and cosmogony, and the world?» To this I replied with a groan. « Ay,» continued he, « he has but that one piece of learning in the world, and he always talks it away whenever he finds a scholar in company; but I know the rogue, and will catch him yet.»

Though I was already sufficiently mortified, my greatest struggle was to come, in facing my wife and daughters. No truant was ever more afraid of returning to school, there to behold the master's visage, than I was of going home.

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I was determined, however, to anticipate their fury, by first falling into a passion myself.

But, alas! upon entering, I found the family no way disposed for battle. My wife and girls were all in tears, Mr Thornhill having been there that day to inform them, that their journey to town was entirely over. The two ladies having heard reports of us from some malicious person about us, were that day set out for London. He could neither discover the tendency, nor the author of these; but whatever they might be, or whoever might have broached them, he continued to assure our family of his friendship and protection. I found, therefore, that they bore my disappointment with great resignation, as it was eclipsed in the greatness of their own. But what perplexed us most, was to think who could be so base as to asperse the character of a family so harmless as ours, too humble to excite envy, and too inoffensive to create disgust.

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CHAPTER XV.

All Mr Burchell's villany at once detected.—The folly of being over-wise.

THAT evening, and a part of the following day, was employed in fruitless attempts to discover our enemies: scarcely a family in the neighbourhood but incurred our suspicions, and each of us had reasons for our opinion best known to ourselves. As we were in this perplexity, one of our little boys, who had been playing abroad, brought in a letter-case, which he found on the green. It was quickly known to belong to Mr Burchell, with whom it had been seen, and, upon examination, contained some hints upon different subjects; but what particularly engaged our attention was a sealed note superscribed, *The copy of a letter to be sent to the two ladies at Thornhill-castle.* It instantly occurred that he was the base informer, and we deliberated whether the note should not be broke open. I was against it; but Sophia, who said she was sure that of all men he would be the last to be guilty of so much baseness, insisted upon its being read. In this she was seconded by the rest of the family, and at their joint solicitation I read as follows:

« LADIES,

« THE bearer will sufficiently satisfy you as to the person from whom this comes: one at least the friend of innocence,

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and ready to prevent its being seduced. I am informed for a truth that you have some intention of bringing two young ladies to town, whom I have some knowledge of, under the character of companions. As I would neither have simplicity imposed upon, nor virtue contaminated, I must offer it as my opinion, that the impropriety of such a step will be attended with dangerous consequences. It has never been my way to treat the infamous or the lewd with severity; nor should I now have taken this method of explaining myself, or reproving folly, did it not aim at guilt. Take therefore the admonition of a friend, and seriously reflect on the consequences of introducing infamy and vice into retreats, where peace and innocence have hitherto resided.»

Our doubts were now at an end. There seemed indeed something applicable to both sides in this letter, and its censures might as well be referred to those to whom it was written, as to us; but the malicious meaning was obvious, and we went no farther. My wife had scarcely patience to hear me to the end, but railed at the writer with unrestrained resentment. Olivia was equally severe, and Sophia seemed perfectly amazed at his baseness. As for my part, it appeared to me one of the vilest instances of unprovoked ingratitude I had met with; nor could I account for it in any other manner, than by imputing it to his desire of detaining my youngest daughter in the country, to have the more frequent opportunities of an interview. In this manner we all sat ruminating upon schemes of vengeance, when our other little boy came running in to tell us that Mr Burchell was approaching at the other end of the field. It is easier to conceive than describe the complicated sensations which are felt from the pain of a recent injury, and the plea-

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sure of approaching vengeance. Though our intentions were only to upbraid him with his ingratitude, yet it was resolved to do it in a manner that would be perfectly cutting. For this purpose we agreed to meet him with our usual smiles; to chat in the beginning with more than ordinary kindness; to amuse him a little; and then, in the midst of the flattering calm, to burst upon him like an earthquake, and overwhelm him with a sense of his own baseness. This being resolved upon, my wife undertook to manage the business herself, as she really had some talents for such an undertaking. We saw him approach; he entered, drew a chair, and sat down.—« A fine day, Mr Burchell.»—« A very fine day, doctor; though I fancy we shall have some rain by the shooting of my corns.»—« The shooting of your horns!» cried my wife in a loud fit of laughter, and then asked pardon for being fond of a joke.—« Dear madam,» replied he, « I pardon you with all my heart, for I protest I should not have thought it a joke had you not told me.»—« Perhaps not, sir,» cried my wife, winking at us; « and yet I dare say you can tell us how many jokes go to an ounce.»—« I fancy, madam,» returned Burchell, « you have been reading a jest book this morning, that ounce of jokes is so very good a conceit; and yet, madam, I had rather see half an ounce of understanding.»—« I believe you might,» cried my wife, still smiling at us, though the laugh was against her; « and yet I have seen some men pretend to understanding that have very little.»—« And no doubt,» returned her antagonist, « you have known ladies set up for wit that had none.» I quickly began to find that my wife was likely to gain but little at this business; so I resolved to treat him in a style of more severity myself. « Both wit and understanding,» cried I, « are trifles without integrity; it is that which gives value to every character.

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The ignorant peasant without fault, is greater than the philosopher with many; for what is genius or courage without a heart? *An honest man is the noblest work of God.*»

« I always held that hackneyed maxim of Pope,» returned Mr Burchell, « as very unworthy a man of genius, and a base desertion of his own superiority. As the reputation of books is raised, not by their freedom from defect, but the greatness of their beauties; so should that of men be prized, not for their exemption from fault, but the size of those virtues they are possessed of. The scholar may want prudence, the statesman may have pride, and the champion ferocity; but shall we prefer to these the low mechanic, who laboriously plods through life without censure or applause? We might as well prefer the tame correct paintings of the Flemish school to the erroneous but sublime animations of the Roman pencil.»

« Sir,» replied I, « your present observation is just, when there are shining virtues and minute defects; but when it appears that great vices are opposed in the same mind to as extraordinary virtues, such a character deserves contempt.»

« Perhaps,» cried he, « there may be some such monsters as you describe, of great vices joined to great virtues; yet in my progress through life, I never yet found one instance of their existence: on the contrary, I have ever perceived, that where the mind was capacious, the affections were good. And indeed Providence seems kindly our friend in this particular, thus to debilitate the understanding where the heart is corrupt, and diminish the power, where there is the will to do mischief. This rule seems to extend even to other animals: the little vermin race are ever treacherous, cruel, and cowardly, whilst those endowed with strength and power are generous, brave, and gentle.»

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« These observations sound well,» returned I, « and yet it would be easy this moment to point out a man,» and I fixed my eye steadfastly upon him, « whose head and heart form a most detestable contrast. Ay, sir,» continued I, raising my voice, « and I am glad to have this opportunity of detecting him in the midst of his fancied security. Do you know this, sir, this pocket-book?»—« Yes, sir,» returned he, with a face of impenetrable assurance, « that pocket-book is mine, and I am glad you have found it.»—« And do you know» cried I, « this letter? Nay, never falter, man; but look me full in the face: I say, do you know this letter?»—« That letter,» returned he; « yes, it was I that wrote that letter.»—« And how could you,» said I, « so basely, so ungratefully presume to write this letter?»—« And how came you,» replied he with looks of unparalleled effrontery, « so basely to presume to break open this letter? Don't you know, now, I could hang you all for this? All that I have to do is to swear at the next justice's, that you have been guilty of breaking open the lock of my pocket-book, and so hang you all up at this door.» This piece of unexpected insolence raised me to such a pitch, that I could scarcely govern my passion. « Ungrateful wretch! begone, and no longer pollute my dwelling with thy baseness! begone, and never let me see thee again! Go from my door, and the only punishment I wish thee is an alarmed conscience, which will be a sufficient tormentor!» So saying, I threw him his pocket-book, which he took up with a smile, and shutting the clasps with the utmost composure, left us, quite astonished at the serenity of his assurance. My wife was particularly enraged that nothing could make him angry, or make him seem ashamed of his villanies. « My dear,» cried I, willing to calm those pas-

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sions that had been raised too high among us, « we are not to be surprised that bad men want shame; they only blush at being detected in doing good, but glory in their vices. »

« Guilt and Shame, says the allegory, were at first companions, and in the beginning of their journey, inseparably kept together. But their union was soon found to be disagreeable and inconvenient to both: Guilt gave Shame frequent uneasiness, and Shame often betrayed the secret conspiracies of Guilt. After long disagreement, therefore, they at length consented to part for ever. Guilt boldly walked forward alone, to overtake Fate, that went before in the shape of an executioner; but Shame being naturally timorous, returned back to keep company with Virtue, which in the beginning of their journey they had left behind. Thus, my children, after men have travelled through a few stages in vice, Shame forsakes them, and returns back to wait upon the few virtues they have still remaining. »

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CHAPTER XVI.

The Family use Art, which is opposed with still greater.

WHATEVER might have been Sophia's sensations, the rest of the family was easily consoled for Mr Burchell's absence by the company of our landlord, whose visits now became more frequent, and longer. Though he had been disappointed in procuring my daughters the amusements of the town as he designed, he took every opportunity of supplying them with those little recreations which our retirement would admit of. He usually came in the morning, and while my son and I followed our occupations abroad, he sat with the family at home, and amused them by describing the town, with every part of which he was particularly acquainted. He could repeat all the observations that were retailed in the atmosphere of the play-houses, and had all the good things of the high wits by rote, long before they made their way into the jest-books. The intervals between conversation were employed in teaching my daughters piquet, or sometimes in setting my two little ones to box, to make them *sharp*, as he called it: but the hopes of having him for a son-in-law, in some measure blinded us to all his imperfections. It must be owned, that my wife laid a thousand schemes to entrap him; or, to speak more tenderly, used every art to magnify the merit of her daughter.

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If the cakes at tea ate short and crisp, they were made by Olivia; if the gooseberry-wine was well knit, the gooseberries were of her gathering: it was her fingers which gave the pickles their peculiar green; and in the composition of a pudding, it was her judgment that mixed the ingredients. Then the poor woman would sometimes tell the 'Squire, that she thought him and Olivia extremely of a size, and would bid both stand up to see which was tallest. These instances of cunning, which she thought impenetrable, yet which every body saw through, were very pleasing to our benefactor, who gave every day some new proofs of his passion, which, though they had not arisen to proposals of marriage, yet we thought fell but little short of it; and his slowness was attributed sometimes to native bashfulness, and sometimes to his fear of offending his uncle. An occurrence, however, which happened soon after, put it beyond a doubt that he designed to become one of our family; my wife even regarded it as an absolute promise.

My wife and daughters happening to return a visit to neighbour Flamborough's, found that family had lately got their pictures drawn by a limner, who travelled the country, and took likenesses for fifteen shillings a-head. As this family and ours had long a sort of rivalry in point of taste, our spirit took the alarm at this stolen march upon us, and notwithstanding all I could say, and I said much, it was resolved that we should have our pictures done too. Having, therefore, engaged the limner,—for what could I do? our next deliberation was, to show the superiority of our taste in the attitudes. As for our neighbour's family, there were seven of them, and they were drawn with seven oranges, a thing quite out of taste, no variety in life, no composition in the world. We desired to have something in a brighter style, and, after many debates, at length came

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to an unanimous resolution of being drawn together in one large historical family piece. This would be cheaper, since one frame would serve for all, and it would be infinitely more genteel; for all families of any taste were now drawn in the same manner. As we did not immediately recollect an historical subject to hit us, we were contented each with being drawn as independent historical figures. My wife desired to be represented as Venus, and the painter was desired not to be too frugal of his diamonds in her stomacher and hair. Her two little ones were to be as Cupids by her side, while I, in my gown and band, was to present her with my books on the Whistonian controversy. Olivia would be drawn as an Amazon sitting upon a bank of flowers, dressed in a green joseph, richly laced with gold, and a whip in her hand. Sophia was to be a shepherdess, with as many sheep as the painter could put in for nothing; and Moses was to be dressed out with a hat and white feather. Our taste so much pleased the 'Squire, that he insisted on being put in as one of the family in the character of Alexander the Great, at Olivia's feet. This was considered by us all as an indication of his desire to be introduced into the family, nor could we refuse his request. The painter was therefore set to work, and as he wrought with assiduity and expedition, in less than four days the whole was completed. The piece was large, and it must be owned he did not spare his colours; for which my wife gave him great encomiums. We were all perfectly satisfied with his performance; but an unfortunate circumstance had not occurred till the picture was finished, which now struck us with dismay. It was so very large that we had no place in the house to fix it. How we all came to disregard so material a point is inconceivable; but certain it is, we had been all greatly remiss. The picture, therefore, instead of

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gratifying our vanity, as we hoped, leaned, in a most mortifying manner, against the kitchen wall, where the canvass was stretched and painted, much too large to be got through any of the doors, and the jest of all our neighbours. One compared it to Robinson Crusoe's long-boat, too large to be removed; another thought it more resembled a reel in a bottle: some wondered how it could be got out, but still more were amazed how it ever got in.

But though it excited the ridicule of some, it effectually raised more malicious suggestions in many. The 'Squire's portrait being found united with ours, was an honour too great to escape envy. Scandalous whispers began to circulate at our expense, and our tranquillity was continually disturbed by persons who came as friends to tell us what was said of us by enemies. These reports we always resented with becoming spirit; but scandal ever improves by opposition.

We once again therefore entered into a consultation upon obviating the malice of our enemies, and at last came to a resolution which had too much cunning to give me entire satisfaction. It was this: as our principal object was to discover the honour of Mr Thornhill's addresses, my wife undertook to sound him, by pretending to ask his advice in the choice of a husband for her eldest daughter. If this was not found sufficient to induce him to a declaration, it was then resolved to terrify him with a rival. To this last step, however, I would by no means give my consent, till Olivia gave me the most solemn assurances that she would marry the person provided to rival him upon this occasion, if he did not prevent it, by taking her himself. Such was the scheme laid, which, though I did not strenuously oppose, I did not entirely approve.

The next time, therefore, that Mr Thornhill came to

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see us, my girls took care to be out of the way, in order to give their mamma an opportunity of putting her scheme in execution; but they only retired to the next room, whence they could overhear the whole conversation. My wife artfully introduced it, by observing, that one of the Miss Flamboroughs was like to have a very good match of it in Mr Spanker. To this the 'Squire assenting, she proceeded to remark, that they who had warm fortunes were always sure of getting good husbands: « But Heaven help,» continued she, « the girls that have none. What signifies beauty, Mr Thornhill? or what signifies all the virtue, and all the qualifications in the world, in this age of self-interest? It is not, what is she? but what has she? is all the cry.»

« Madam,» returned he, « I highly approve the justice, as well as the novelty of your remarks, and if I were a king, it should be otherwise. It should then, indeed, be fine times with the girls without fortunes: our two young ladies should be the first for whom I would provide.»

« Ah, sir,» returned my wife, « you are pleased to be facetious: but I wish I were a queen, and then I know where my eldest daughter should look for a husband. But, now that you have put it into my head, seriously, Mr Thornhill, can't you recommend me a proper husband for her? she is now nineteen years old, well grown and well educated, and, in my humble opinion, does not want for parts.»

« Madam,» replied he, « if I were to choose, I would find out a person possessed of every accomplishment that can make an angel happy. One with prudence, fortune, taste, and sincerity; such, madam, would be, in my opinion, the proper husband.» « Ay, sir,» said she, « but do you know of any such person?»—« No, madam,» returned he, « it is impossible to know any person that deserves to

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be her husband: she's too great a treasure for one man's possession; she's a goddess! Upon my soul, I speak what I think, she's an angel.»—« Ah, Mr Thornhill, you only flatter my poor girl: but we have been thinking of marrying her to one of your tenants, whose mother is lately dead, and who wants a manager: you know whom I mean, Farmer Williams; a warm man, Mr Thornhill, able to give her good bread; and who has several times made her proposals (which was actually the case): but, sir,» concluded she, « I should be glad to have your approbation of our choice.»—« How! madam,» replied he, « my approbation! My approbation of such a choice! Never. What! sacrifice so much beauty, and sense, and goodness, to a creature insensible of the blessing! Excuse me, I can never approve of such a piece of injustice! And I have my reasons.»—« Indeed, sir,» cried Deborah, « if you have your reasons, that's another affair; but I should be glad to know those reasons.»—« Excuse me, madam,» returned he, « they lie too deep for discovery (laying his hand upon his bosom); they remain buried, riveted here.»

After he was gone, upon a general consultation, we could not tell what to make of these fine sentiments. Olivia considered them as instances of the most exalted passion; but I was not quite so sanguine: it seemed to me pretty plain, that they had more of love than matrimony in them: yet, whatever they might portend, it was resolved to prosecute the scheme of Farmer Williams, who, from my daughter's first appearance in the country, had paid her his addresses.

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CHAPTER XVII.

Scarcely any Virtue found to resist the power of long and pleasing Temptation.

As I only studied my child's real happiness, the assiduity of Mr Williams pleased me, as he was in easy circumstances, prudent, and sincere. It required but very little encouragement to revive his former passion; so that in an evening or two he and Mr Thornhill met at our house, and surveyed each other for some time with looks of anger; but Williams owed his landlord no rent, and little regarded his indignation. Olivia, on her side, acted the coquette to perfection, if that might be called acting which was her real character, pretending to lavish all her tenderness on her new lover. Mr Thornhill appeared quite dejected at this preference, and with a pensive air took leave, though I own it puzzled me to find him so much in pain as he appeared to be, when he had it in his power so easily to remove the cause, by declaring an honourable passion. But whatever uneasiness he seemed to endure, it could easily be perceived that Olivia's anguish was still greater. After any of these interviews between her lovers, of which there were several, she usually retired to solitude, and there indulged her grief. It was in such a situation I found her one evening, after she had been for some time supporting a fictitious gaiety. « You now see, my child, » said I, « that

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your confidence in Mr Thornhill's passion was all a dream: he permits the rivalry of another, every way his inferior, though he knows it lies in his power to secure you to himself by a candid declaration.»—« Yes, papa,» returned she, « but he has his reasons for this delay: I know he has. The sincerity of his looks and words convinces me of his real esteem. A short time, I hope, will discover the generosity of his sentiments, and convince you that my opinion of him has been more just than yours.»—« Olivia, my darling,» returned I, «every scheme that has been hitherto pursued to compel him to a declaration, has been proposed and planned by yourself, nor can you in the least say that I have constrained you. But you must not suppose, my dear, that I will ever be instrumental in suffering his honest rival to be the dupe of your ill-placed passion. Whatever time you require to bring your fancied admirer to an explanation, shall be granted; but at the expiration of that term, if he is still regardless, I must absolutely insist that honest Mr Williams shall be rewarded for his fidelity. The character which I have hitherto supported in life demands this from me, and my tenderness as a parent shall never influence my integrity as a man. Name then your day; let it be as distant as you think proper; and in the mean time, take care to let Mr Thornhill know the exact time on which I design delivering you up to another. If he really loves you, his own good sense will readily suggest that there is but one method alone to prevent his losing you for ever.»—This proposal, which she could not avoid considering as perfectly just, was readily agreed to. She again renewed her most positive promise of marrying Mr Williams, in case of the other's insensibility; and at the next opportunity, in Mr Thornhill's presence, that day month was fixed upon for her nuptials with his rival.

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Such vigorous proceedings seemed to redouble Mr Thornhill's anxiety: but what Olivia really felt gave me some uneasiness. In this struggle between prudence and passion, her vivacity quite forsook her, and every opportunity of solitude was sought, and spent in tears. One week passed away; but Mr Thornhill made no efforts to restrain her nuptials. The succeeding week he was still assiduous; but not more open. On the third he discontinued his visits entirely, and instead of my daughter testifying any impatience, as I expected, she seemed to retain a pensive tranquillity, which I looked upon as resignation. For my own part, I was now sincerely pleased with thinking that my child was going to be secured in a continuance of competence and peace, and frequently applauded her resolution, in preferring happiness to ostentation.

It was within about four days of her intended nuptials, that my little family at night were gathered round a charming fire, telling stories of the past, and laying schemes for the future; busied in forming a thousand projects, and laughing at whatever folly came uppermost. « Well, Moses,» cried I, « we shall soon, my boy, have a wedding in the family; what is your opinion of matters and things in general?»—« My opinion, father, is, that all things go on very well; and I was just now thinking, that when sister Livy is married to Farmer Williams, we shall then have the loan of his cider press and brewing tubs for nothing.» —« That we shall, Moses,» cried I, « and he will sing us *Death and the Lady*, to raise our spirits, into the bargain.»— « He has taught that song to our Dick,» cried Moses, « and I think he goes through it very prettily.»—« Does he so?» cried I, « then let us have it: where's little Dick? let him up with it boldly.»—« My brother Dick,» cried Bill, my youngest, « is just gone out with sister Livy; but Mr

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Williams has taught me two songs, and I'll sing them for you, papa. Which song do you choose, *The Dying Swan*, or the *Elegy on the Death of a Mad Dog?*» «The elegy, child, by all means,» said I; «I never heard that yet; and Deborah, my life, grief you know is dry, let us have a bottle of the best gooseberry-wine, to keep up our spirits. I have wept so much at all sorts of elegies of late, that, without an enlivening glass, I am sure this will overcome me; and Sophy, love, take your guitar, and thrum in with the boy a little.»

AN ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF A MAD DOG.

Good people all, of every sort,
Give ear unto my song,
And if you find it wondrous short,
It cannot hold you long.

In Islington there was a man,
Of whom the world might say,
That still a godly race he ran,
Whene'er he went to pray.

A kind and gentle heart he had,
To comfort friends and foes;
The naked every day he clad,
When he put on his clothes.

And in that town a dog was found,
As many dogs there be,
Both mongrel, puppy, whelp, and hound,
And curs of low degree.

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This dog and man at first were friends;
But when a pique began,
The dog, to gain some private ends,
Went mad, and bit the man.

Around from all the neighbouring streets
The wondering neighbours ran,
And swore the dog had lost his wits,
To bite so good a man.

The wound it seem'd both sore and sad
To every Christian eye;
And while they swore the dog was mad,
They swore the man would die.

But soon a wonder came to light,
That show'd the rogues they lied,—
The man recover'd of the bite,
The dog it was that died.

« A very good boy, Bill, upon my word, and an elegy that may truly be called tragical. Come, my children, here's Bill's health, and may he one day be a bishop!»

« With all my heart,» cried my wife; « and if he but preaches as well as he sings, I make no doubt of him. The most of his family, by the mother's side, could sing a good song: it was a common saying in our country, that the family of the Blenkinsops could never look straight before them, nor the Hugginsons blow out a candle; that there were none of the Grograms but could sing a song, or of the Marjorams but could tell a story.»—« However that be,» cried I, « the most vulgar ballad of them all generally pleases me better than the fine modern odes, and things that petrify us in a single stanza; productions that we at once detest and praise. Put the glass to your brother,

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Moses. The great fault of these elegiasts is, that they are in despair for griefs that give the sensible part of mankind very little pain. A lady loses her muff, her fan, or her lap-dog, and so the silly poet runs home to versify the disaster.»

«That may be the mode,» cried Moses, «in sublimer compositions; but the Ranelagh songs that come down to us are perfectly familiar, and all cast in the same mould: Colin meets Dolly, and they hold a dialogue together; he gives her a fairing to put in her hair, and she presents him with a nosegay; and then they go together to church, where they give good advice to young nymphs and swains to get married as fast as they can.»

«And very good advice too,» cried I; «and I am told there is not a place in the world where advice can be given with so much propriety as there; for as it persuades us to marry, it also furnishes us with a wife: and surely that must be an excellent market, my boy, where we are told what we want, and supplied with it when wanting.»

«Yes, sir,» returned Moses, «and I know but of two such markets for wives in Europe, Ranelagh in England, and Fontarabia in Spain. The Spanish market is open once a-year; but our English wives are saleable every night.»

«You are right, my boy,» cried his mother; «Old England is the only place in the world for husbands to get wives.»—«And for wives to manage their husbands,» interrupted I. «It is a proverb abroad, that if a bridge were built across the sea, all the ladies of the continent would come over to take pattern from ours; for there are no such wives in Europe as our own. But let us have one bottle more, Deborah, my life; and Moses, give us a good song. What thanks do we not owe to Heaven for thus bestowing

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tranquillity, health, and competence. I think myself happier now than the greatest monarch upon earth. He has no such fire-side, nor such pleasant faces about it. Yes, Deborah, we are now growing old; but the evening of our life is likely to be happy. We are descended from ancestors that knew no stain, and we shall leave a good and virtuous race of children behind us. While we live, they will be our support and our pleasure here; and when we die, they will transmit our honour untainted to posterity. Come, my son, we wait for a song: let us have a chorus. But where is my darling Olivia? That little cherub's voice is always sweetest in the concert.»—Just as I spoke Dick came running in, «O papa, papa, she is gone from us, she is gone from us; my sister Livy is gone from us for ever.» —«Gone child!»—«Yes, she is gone off with two gentlemen in a post-chaise, and one of them kissed her, and said he would die for her: and she cried very much, and was for coming back; but he persuaded her again, and she went into the chaise, and said, O what will my poor papa do when he knows I am undone!»—«Now then,» cried I, «my children, go and be miserable; for we shall never enjoy one hour more. And O may Heaven's everlasting fury light upon him and his!—Thus to rob me of my child!—And sure it will, for taking back my sweet innocent that I was leading up to Heaven. Such sincerity as my child was possessed of!—But all our earthly happiness is now over! Go, my children, go and be miserable and infamous; for my heart is broken within me!»— «Father,» cried my son, «is this your fortitude?»—«Fortitude, child! Yes, he shall see I have fortitude! Bring me my pistols. I'll pursue the traitor: while he is on earth I'll pursue him. Old as I am, he shall find I can sting him yet. The villain! The perfidious villain!»—I

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had by this time reached down my pistols, when my poor wife, whose passions were not so strong as mine, caught me in her arms. «My dearest, dearest husband,» cried she, «the Bible is the only weapon that is fit for your old hands now. Open that, my love, and read our anguish into patience, for she has vilely deceived us.»—«Indeed, sir,» resumed my son, after a pause, «your rage is too violent and unbecoming. You should be my mother's comforter, and you increase her pain. It ill suited you and your reverend character, thus to curse your greatest enemy: you should not have cursed him, villain as he is.»—«I did not curse him, child, did I?»—«Indeed, sir, you did; you cursed him twice.»—«Then may Heaven forgive me and him if I did! And now, my son, I see it was more than human benevolence that first taught us to bless our enemies! Blessed be his holy name for all the good he hath given, and for all that he hath taken away. But it is not—it is not a small distress that can wring tears from these old eyes, that have not wept for so many years. My child!—To undo my darling!—May confusion seize—Heaven forgive me, what am I about to say!—You may remember, my love, how good she was, and how charming; till this vile moment, all her care was to make us happy. Had she but died!—But she is gone, the honour of our family contaminated, and I must look out for happiness in other worlds than here. But, my child, you saw them go off: perhaps he forced her away? If he forced her, she may yet be innocent.»—«Ah no, sir,» cried the child; «he only kissed her, and called her his angel, and she wept very much, and leaned upon his arm, and they drove off very fast.»—«She 's an ungrateful creature,» cried my wife, who could scarcely speak for weeping, «to use us

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thus. She never had the least constraint put upon her affections. The vile strumpet has basely deserted her parents without any provocation—thus to bring your gray hairs to the grave, and I must shortly follow.

In this manner that night, the first of our real misfortunes, was spent in the bitterness of complaint, and ill-supported sallies of enthusiasm. I determined, however, to find out our betrayer, wherever he was, and reproach his baseness. The next morning we missed our wretched child at breakfast, where she used to give life and cheerfulness to us all. My wife, as before, attempted to ease her heart by reproaches. « Never, » cried she, « shall that vilest stain of our family again darken these harmless doors. I will never call her daughter more. No, let the strumpet live with her vile seducer: she may bring us to shame, but she shall never more deceive us. »

« Wife, » said I, « do not talk thus hardly: my detestation of her guilt is as great as yours; but ever shall this house and this heart be open to a poor returning repentant sinner. The sooner she returns from her transgression, the more welcome shall she be to me. For the first time the very best may err; art may persuade, and novelty spread out its charm. The first fault is the child of simplicity, but every other the offspring of guilt. Yes, the wretched creature shall be welcome to this heart and this house, though stained with ten thousand vices. I will again hearken to the music of her voice, again will I hang fondly on her bosom, if I find but repentance there. My son, bring hither my Bible and my staff: I will pursue her, wherever she is; and though I cannot save her from shame, I may prevent the continuance of iniquity. »

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CHAPTER XVIII.

The Pursuit of a Father to reclaim a lost Child to Virtue.

THOUGH the child could not describe the gentleman's person who handed his sister into the post-chaise, yet my suspicions fell entirely upon our young landlord, whose character for such intrigues was but too well known. I therefore directed my steps towards Thornhill-castle, resolving to upbraid him, and, if possible, to bring back my daughter: but before I had reached his seat, I was met by one of my parishioners, who said he saw a young lady, resembling my daughter, in a post-chaise with a gentleman, whom, by the description, I could only guess to be Mr Burchell, and that they drove very fast. This information, however, did by no means satisfy me. I therefore went to the young 'Squire's, and though it was yet early, insisted upon seeing him immediately. He soon appeared with the most open familiar air, and seemed perfectly amazed at my daughter's elopement, protesting upon his honour that he was quite a stranger to it. I now therefore condemned my former suspicions, and could turn them only on Mr Burchell, who I recollected had of late several private conferences with her: but the appearance of another witness left me no room to doubt his villany, who averred, that he and my daughter were actually gone towards the Wells, about thirty miles

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off, where there was a great deal of company. Being driven to that state of mind in which we are more ready to act precipitately than to reason right, I never debated with myself, whether these accounts might not have been given by persons purposely placed in my way to mislead me, but resolved to pursue my daughter and her fancied deluder thither. I walked along with earnestness, and inquired of several by the way; but received no accounts, till, entering the town, I was met by a person on horseback, whom I remembered to have seen at the 'Squire's, and he assured me, that if I followed them to the races, which were but thirty miles farther, I might depend upon overtaking them; for he had seen them dance there the night before, and the whole assembly seemed charmed with my daughter's performance. Early the next day, I walked forward to the races, and about four in the afternoon I came upon the course. The company made a very brilliant appearance, all earnestly employed in one pursuit, that of pleasure: how different from mine, that of reclaiming a lost child to virtue! I thought I perceived Mr Burchell at some distance from me; but, as if he dreaded an interview, upon my approaching him, he mixed among a crowd, and I saw him no more. I now reflected that it would be to no purpose to continue my pursuit farther, and resolved to return home to an innocent family, who wanted my assistance. But the agitations of my mind, and the fatigues I had undergone, threw me into a fever, the symptoms of which I perceived before I came off the course. This was another unexpected stroke, as I was more than seventy miles distant from home: however, I retired to a little ale-house by the road-side, and in this place, the usual retreat of indigence and frugality, I laid me down patiently to wait the issue of my disorder. I languished here for nearly three

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weeks; but at last my constitution prevailed, though I was unprovided with money to defray the expenses of my entertainment. It is possible the anxiety from this last circumstance alone might have brought on a relapse, had I not been supplied by a traveller, who stopped to take a cursory refreshment. This person was no other than the philanthropic bookseller in St Paul's Church-yard, who has written so many little books for children: he called himself their friend; but he was the friend of all mankind. He was no sooner alighted, but he was in haste to be gone; for he was ever on business of the utmost importance, and was at that time actually compiling materials for the history of one Mr Thomas Trip. I immediately recollected this good-natured man's red pimpled face; for he had published for me against the Deuterogamists of the age, and from him I borrowed a few pieces, to be paid at my return. Leaving the inn, therefore, as I was yet but weak, I resolved to return home by easy journeys of ten miles a-day. My health and usual tranquillity were almost restored, and I now condemned that pride which had made me refractory to the hand of correction. Man little knows what calamities are beyond his patience to bear, till he tries them: as in ascending the heights of ambition, which look bright from below, every step we rise shows us some new and gloomy prospect of hidden disappointment; so in our descent from the summits of pleasure, though the vale of misery below may appear at first dark and gloomy, yet the busy mind, still attentive to its own amusement, finds, as we descend, something to flatter and to please. Still, as we approach, the darkest objects appear to brighten, and the mental eye becomes adapted to its gloomy situation.

I now proceeded forward, and had walked about two hours, when I perceived what appeared at a distance like a

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waggon, which I was resolved to overtake; but when I came up with it, found it to be a strolling company's cart, that was carrying their scenes and other theatrical furniture to the next village, where they were to exhibit. The cart was attended only by the person who drove it, and one of the company, as the rest of the players were to follow the ensuing day. «Good company upon the road,» says the proverb, «is the shortest cut.» I therefore entered into conversation with the poor player; and as I once had some theatrical powers myself, I disserted on such topics with my usual freedom: but as I was pretty much unacquainted with the present state of the stage, I demanded who were the present theatrical writers in vogue, who the Drydens and Otways of the day?—«I fancy, sir,» cried the player, «few of our modern dramatists would think themselves much honoured by being compared to the writers you mention. Dryden's and Rowe's manner, sir, are quite out of fashion; our taste has gone back a whole century; Fletcher, Ben Jonson, and all the plays of Shakspeare, are the only things that go down.»—«How,» cried I, «is it possible the present age can be pleased with that antiquated dialect, that obsolete humour, those overcharged characters, which abound in the works you mention?»—«Sir,» returned my companion, «the public think nothing about dialect, or humour, or character, for that is none of their business; they only go to be amused, and find themselves happy when they can enjoy a pantomime, under the sanction of Jonson's or Shakspeare's name.»—«So then, I suppose,» cried I, «that our modern dramatists are rather imitators of Shakspeare than of nature.»—«To say the truth,» returned my companion, «I don't know that they imitate any thing at all; nor indeed does the public require it of them: it is not the composition of the piece, but the number of

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starts and attitudes that may be introduced into it, that elicits applause. I have known a piece, with not one jest in the whole, shrugged into popularity, and another saved by the poet's throwing in a fit of the gripes. No, sir, the works of Congreve and Farquhar have too much wit in them for the present taste; our modern dialect is much more natural.»

By this time the equipage of the strolling company was arrived at the village, which, it seems, had been apprized of our approach, and was come out to gaze at us: for my companion observed, that strollers always have more spectators without doors than within. I did not consider the impropriety of my being in such company, till I saw a mob gather about me. I therefore took shelter, as fast as possible, in the first ale-house that offered, and being shown into the common room, was accosted by a very well dressed gentleman, who demanded whether I was the real chaplain of the company, or whether it was only to be my masquerade character in the play. Upon my informing him of the truth, and that I did not belong in any sort to the company, he was condescending enough to desire me and the player to partake in a bowl of punch, over which he discussed modern politics with great earnestness and interest. I set him down in my own mind for nothing less than a parliament-man at least; but was almost confirmed in my conjectures, when, upon asking what there was in the house for supper, he insisted that the player and I should sup with him at his house; with which request, after some entreaties, we were prevailed on to comply.

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CHAPTER XIX.

The description of a Person discontented with the present Government, and apprehensive of the loss of our Liberties.

THE house where we were to be entertained lying at a small distance from the village, our inviter observed, that as the coach was not ready, he would conduct us on foot; and we soon arrived at one of the most magnificent mansions I had seen in that part of the country. The apartment into which we were shown was perfectly elegant and modern: he went to give orders for supper, while the player, with a wink, observed that we were perfectly in luck. Our entertainer soon returned; an elegant supper was brought in, two or three ladies in easy dishabille were introduced, and the conversation began with some sprightliness. Politics, however, was the subject on which our entertainer chiefly expatiated; for he asserted that liberty was at once his boast and his terror. After the cloth was removed, he asked me if I had seen the last Monitor? to which replying in the negative, «What, nor the Auditor, I suppose?» cried he. «Neither, sir,» returned I. «That's strange, very strange,» replied my entertainer. «Now I read all the politics that come out. The Daily, the Public, the Ledger, the Chronicle, the London Evening, the Whitehall Evening, the seventeen Magazines, and the two Reviews; and though they hate each other, I love them all.

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Liberty, sir, liberty is the Briton's boast, and by all my coal-mines in Cornwall, I reverence its guardians.»—«Then it is to be hoped,» cried I, «you reverence the king.»—«Yes,» returned my entertainer, «when he does what we would have him; but if he goes on as he has done of late, I'll never trouble myself more with his matters. I say nothing. I think, only, I could have directed some things better. I don't think there has been a sufficient number of advisers: he should advise with every person willing to give him advice, and then we should have things done in another guess manner.»

«I wish,» cried I, «that such intruding advisers were fixed in the pillory. It should be the duty of honest men to assist the weaker side of our constitution, that sacred power which has for some years been every day declining, and losing its due share of influence in the state. But these ignorants still continue the same cry of liberty; and if they have any weight, basely throw it into the subsiding scale.»

«How,» cried one of the ladies, «do I live to see one so base, so sordid, as to be an enemy to liberty, and a defender of tyrants? Liberty, that sacred gift of Heaven, that glorious privilege of Britons!»

«Can it be possible,» cried our entertainer, «that there should be any found at present advocates for slavery? Any who are for meanly giving up the privilege of Britons? Can any, sir, be so abject?»

«No, sir,» replied I, «I am for liberty, that attribute of God! Glorious liberty! that theme of modern declamation. I would have all men kings. I would be a king myself. We have all naturally an equal right to the throne: we are all originally equal. This is my opinion, and was once the opinion of a set of honest men who were called

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Levellers. They tried to erect themselves into a community, where all should be equally free. But, alas! it would never answer; for there were some among them stronger, and some more cunning than others, and these became masters of the rest; for as sure as your groom rides your horses, because he is a cunninger animal than they, so surely will the animal that is cunninger or stronger than he, sit upon his shoulders in turn. Since then it is entailed upon humanity to submit, and some are born to command, and others to obey, the question is, as there must be tyrants, whether it is better to have them in the same house with us, or in the same village, or still farther off, in the metropolis. Now, sir, for my own part, as I naturally hate the face of a tyrant, the farther off he is removed from me, the better pleased am I. The generality of mankind also are of my way of thinking, and have unanimously created one king, whose election at once diminishes the number of tyrants, and puts tyranny at the greatest distance from the greatest number of people. Now the great, who were tyrants themselves before the election of one tyrant, are naturally averse to a power raised over them, and whose weight must ever lean heaviest on the subordinate orders. It is the interest of the great, therefore, to diminish kingly power as much as possible; because whatever they take from that, is naturally restored to themselves; and all they have to do in the state, is to undermine the single tyrant, by which they resume their primeval authority. Now the state may be so circumstanced, or its laws may be so disposed, or its men of opulence so minded, as all to conspire in carrying on this business of undermining monarchy. For, in the first place, if the circumstances of our state be such as to favour the accumulation of wealth, and make the opulent

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still more rich, this will increase their ambition. An accumulation of wealth, however, must necessarily be the consequence, when, as at present, more riches flow in from external commerce than arise from internal industry; for external commerce can only be managed to advantage by the rich, and they have also at the same time all the emoluments arising from internal industry; so that the rich, with us, have two sources of wealth, whereas the poor have but one. For this reason, wealth, in all commercial states, is found to accumulate, and all such have hitherto in time become aristocratical. Again, the very laws also of this country may contribute to the accumulation of wealth; as when, by their means, the natural ties that bind the rich and poor together are broken, and it is ordained, that the rich shall only marry with the rich; or when the learned are held unqualified to serve their country as counsellors, merely from a defect of opulence, and wealth is thus made the object of a wise man's ambition; by these means, I say, and such means as these, riches will accumulate. Now the possessor of accumulated wealth, when furnished with the necessaries and pleasures of life, has no other method to employ the superfluity of his fortune but in purchasing power. That is, differently speaking, in making dependants, by purchasing the liberty of the needy or the venal, of men who are willing to bear the mortification of contiguous tyranny for bread. Thus each very opulent man generally gathers round him a circle of the poorest of the people; and the polity abounding in accumulated wealth, may be compared to a Cartesian system, each orb with a vortex of its own. Those, however, who are willing to move in a great man's vortex, are only such as must be slaves, the rabble of mankind, whose souls and whose education are adapted to servitude, and who know no-

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thing of liberty except the name. But there must still be a large number of the people without the sphere of the opulent man's influence, namely, that order of men which subsists between the very rich and the very rabble; those men who are possessed of too large fortunes to submit to the neighbouring man in power, and yet are too poor to set up for tyranny themselves. In this middle order of mankind are generally to be found all the arts, wisdom, and virtues of society. This order alone is known to be the true preserver of freedom, and may be called *the people*. Now it may happen that this middle order of mankind may lose all its influence in a state, and its voice be in a manner drowned in that of the rabble: for if the fortune sufficient for qualifying a person at present to give his voice in state affairs be ten times less than was judged sufficient upon forming the constitution, it is evident that greater numbers of the rabble will thus be introduced into the political system, and they ever moving in the vortex of the great, will follow where greatness shall direct. In such a state, therefore, all that the middle order has left, is to preserve the prerogative and privileges of the one principal governor with the most sacred circumspection. For he divides the power of the rich, and calls off the great from falling with tenfold weight on the middle order placed beneath them. The middle order may be compared to a town, of which the opulent are forming the siege, and of which the governor from without is hastening the relief. While the besiegers are in dread of an enemy over them, it is but natural to offer the townsmen the most specious terms; to flatter them with sounds, and amuse them with privileges; but if they once defeat the governor from behind, the walls of the town will be but a small defence to its inhabitants. What they may then expect, may be seen

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by turning our eyes to Holland, Genoa, or Venice, where the laws govern the poor, and the rich govern the law. I am then for, and would die for, monarchy, sacred monarchy; for if there be any thing sacred amongst men, it must be the anointed SOVEREIGN of his people; and every diminution of his power in war, or in peace, is an infringement upon the real liberties of the subject. The sounds of liberty, patriotism, and Britons, have already done *much;* it is to be hoped that the true sons of freedom will prevent their ever doing more. I have known many of those pretended champions for liberty in my time, yet do I not remember one that was not in his heart and in his family a tyrant.»

My warmth I found had lengthened this harangue beyond the rules of good breeding; but the impatience of my entertainer, who often strove to interrupt it, could be restrained no longer. «What,» cried he, «then I have been all this while entertaining a jesuit in parson's clothes! but by all the coal-mines of Cornwall, out he shall pack, if my name be Wilkinson.» I now found I had gone too far, and asked pardon for the warmth with which I had spoken. «Pardon!» returned he in a fury: «I think such principles demand ten thousand pardons. What? give up liberty, property, and, as the Gazetteer says, lie down to be saddled with wooden shoes! sir, I insist upon your marching out of this house immediately, to prevent worse consequences: sir, I insist upon it.» I was going to repeat my remonstrances; but just then we heard a footman's rap at the door, and the two ladies cried out, «As sure as death there is our master and mistress come home.» It seems my entertainer was all this while only the butler, who, in his master's absence, had a mind to cut a figure, and be for a while the gentleman himself; and, to say the

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truth, he talked politics as well as most country gentlemen do. But nothing could now exceed my confusion upon seeing the gentleman and his lady enter; nor was their surprise at finding such company and good cheer less than ours. «Gentlemen,» cried the real master of the house to me and my companion, «my wife and I are your most humble servants; but I protest this is so unexpected a favour, that we almost sink under the obligation.» However unexpected our company might be to them, theirs, I am sure, was still more so to us, and I was struck dumb with the apprehensions of my own absurdity, when whom should I next see enter the room but my dear Miss Arabella Wilmot, who was formerly designed to be married to my son George, but whose match was broken off as already related. As soon as she saw me, she flew to my arms with the utmost joy.—«My dear sir,» cried she, «to what happy accident is it that we owe so unexpected a visit? I am sure my uncle and aunt will be in raptures when they find they have the good Dr Primrose for their guest.» Upon hearing my name, the old gentleman and lady very politely stepped up, and welcomed me with the most cordial hospitality. Nor could they forbear smiling, upon being informed of the nature of my present visit: but the unfortunate butler, whom they at first seemed disposed to turn away, was at my intercession forgiven.

Mr Arnold and his lady, to whom the house belonged, now insisted upon having the pleasure of my stay for some days; and as their niece, my charming pupil, whose mind in some measure had been formed under my own instructions, joined in their entreaties, I complied. That night I was shown to a magnificent chamber, and the next morning early Miss Wilmot desired to walk with me in the garden, which was decorated in the modern manner.

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After some time spent in pointing out the beauties of the place, she inquired, with seeming unconcern, when last I had heard from my son George? « Alas! madam,» cried I, « he has now been nearly three years absent, without ever writing to his friends or me. Where he is I know not; perhaps I shall never see him or happiness more. No, my dear madam, we shall never more see such pleasing hours as were once spent by our fire-side at Wakefield. My little family are now dispersing very fast, and poverty has brought not only want, but infamy upon us.» The good-natured girl let fall a tear at this account; but as I saw her possessed of too much sensibility, I forebore a more minute detail of our sufferings. It was, however, some consolation to me, to find that time had made no alteration in her affections, and that she had rejected several offers that had been made her since our leaving her part of the country. She led me round all the extensive improvements of the place, pointing to the several walks and arbours, and at the same time catching from every object a hint for some new question relative to my son. In this manner we spent the forenoon, till the bell summoned us in to dinner, where we found the manager of the strolling company that I mentioned before, who was come to dispose of tickets for the Fair Penitent, which was to be acted that evening, the part of Horatio by a young gentleman who had never appeared on any stage. He seemed to be very warm in the praises of the new performer, and averred that he never saw any who bid so fair for excellence. Acting, he observed, was not learned in a day; « but this gentleman,» continued he, « seems born to tread the stage. His voice, his figure, and attitudes, are all admirable. We caught him up accidentally in our journey down.» This

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account, in some measure, excited our curiosity, and, at the entreaty of the ladies, I was prevailed upon to accompany them to the play-house, which was no other than a barn. As the company with which I went was incontestably the chief of the place, we were received with the greatest respect, and placed in the front seat of the theatre; where we sat for some time with no small impatience to see Horatio make his appearance. The new performer advanced at last; and let parents think of my sensations by their own, when I found it was my unfortunate son. He was going to begin, when, turning his eyes upon the audience, he perceived Miss Wilmot and me, and stood at once speechless and immovable. The actors behind the scene, who ascribed this pause to his natural timidity, attempted to encourage him; but instead of going on, he burst into a flood of tears, and retired off the stage. I don't know what were my feelings on this occasion, for they succeeded with too much rapidity for description; but I was soon awaked from this disagreeable reverie by Miss Wilmot, who, pale, and with a trembling voice, desired me to conduct her back to her uncle's. When got home, Mr Arnold, who was as yet a stranger to our extraordinary behaviour, being informed that the new performer was my son, sent his coach and an invitation for him; and as he persisted in his refusal to appear again upon the stage, the players put another in his place, and we soon had him with us. Mr Arnold gave him the kindest reception, and I received him with my usual transport; for I could never counterfeit false resentment. Miss Wilmot's reception was mixed with seeming neglect, and yet I could perceive she acted a studied part. The tumult in her mind seemed not yet abated: she said twenty giddy things that looked

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like joy, and then laughed loud at her own want of meaning. At intervals she would take a sly peep at the glass, as if happy in the consciousness of irresistible beauty, and often would ask questions without giving any manner of attention to the answers.

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CHAPTER XX.

The History of a Philosophic Vagabond, pursuing Novelty, but losing Content.

AFTER we had supped, Mrs Arnold politely offered to send a couple of her footmen for my son's baggage, which he at first seemed to decline; but upon her pressing the request, he was obliged to inform her, that a stick and a wallet were all the movable things upon this earth that he could boast of. «Why, ay, my son,» cried I, «you left me but poor, and poor I find you are come back; and yet I make no doubt you have seen a great deal of the world.»—«Yes, sir,» replied my son, «but travelling after fortune is not the way to secure her; and, indeed, of late I have desisted from the pursuit.»—«I fancy, sir,» cried Mrs Arnold, «that the account of your adventures would be amusing: the first part of them I have often heard from my niece; but could the company prevail for the rest, it would be an additional obligation.»—«Madam,» replied my son, «I promise you the pleasure you have in hearing will not be half so great as my vanity in repeating them; and yet in the whole narrative I can scarcely promise you one adventure, as my account is rather of what I saw than what I did. The first misfortune of my life, which you all know, was great; but though it distressed, it could not sink me. No person ever had a better knack at hoping than I. The

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less kind I found fortune at one time, the more I expected from her another, and being now at the bottom of her wheel, every new revolution might lift, but could not depress me. I proceeded, therefore, towards London in a fine morning, no way uneasy about to-morrow, but cheerful as the birds that caroled by the road, and comforted myself with reflecting, that London was the mart where abilities of every kind were sure of meeting distinction and reward.

« Upon my arrival in town, sir, my first care was to deliver your letter of recommendation to our cousin, who was himself in little better circumstances than I. My first scheme, you know, sir, was to be usher at an academy, and I asked his advice on the affair. Our cousin received the proposal with a true Sardonic grin. Ay, cried he, this is indeed a very pretty career that has been chalked out for you. I have been an usher at a boarding-school myself; and may I die by an anodyne necklace, but I had rather be an under-turnkey in Newgate. I was up early and late: I was browbeat by the master, hated for my ugly face by the mistress, worried by the boys within, and never permitted to stir out to meet civility abroad. But are you sure you are fit for a school? Let me examine you a little. Have you been bred apprentice to the business? No. Then you won't do for a school. Can you dress the boys' hair? No. Then you won't do for a school. Have you had the small-pox? No. Then you won't do for a school. Can you lie three in a bed? No. Then you will never do for a school. Have you got a good stomach? Yes. Then you will by no means do for a school. No, sir, if you are for a genteel easy profession, bind yourself seven years as an apprentice to turn a cutler's wheel; but avoid a school by any means. Yet come, continued he, I see you are a

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lad of spirit and some learning, what do you think of commencing author, like me? You have read in books, no doubt, of men of genius starving at the trade. At present I'll show you forty very dull fellows about town that live by it in opulence; all honest jog-trot men, who go on smoothly and dully, and write history and politics, and are praised: men, sir, who, had they been bred cobblers, would all their lives have only mended shoes, but never made them.

«Finding that there was no great degree of gentility affixed to the character of an usher, I resolved to accept his proposal; and having the highest respect for literature, hailed the *antiqua mater* of Grub-street with reverence. I thought it my glory to pursue a track which Dryden and Otway trod before me. I considered the goddess of this region as the parent of excellence; and however an intercourse with the world might give us good sense, the poverty she entailed I supposed to be the nurse of genius! Big with these reflections, I sat down, and finding that the best things remained to be said on the wrong side, I resolved to write a book that should be wholly new. I therefore dressed up three paradoxes with some ingenuity. They were false, indeed, but they were new. The jewels of truth have been so often imported by others, that nothing was left for me to import but some splendid things that at a distance looked every bit as well. Witness, you powers, what fancied importance sat perched upon my quill while I was writing! The whole learned world, I made no doubt, would rise to oppose my systems; but then I was prepared to oppose the whole learned world. Like the porcupine, I sat self-collected, with a quill pointed against every opposer.»

«Well said, my boy,» cried I, «and what subject did

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you treat upon? I hope you did not pass over the importance of monogamy. But I interrupt; go on: you published your paradoxes; well, and what did the learned world say to your paradoxes?»

«Sir,» replied my son, «the learned world said nothing to my paradoxes; nothing at all, sir. Every man of them was employed in praising his friends and himself, or condemning his enemies: and unfortunately, as I had neither, I suffered the cruelest mortification, neglect.

«As I was meditating one day in a coffee-house on the fate of my paradoxes, a little man happening to enter the room, placed himself in the box before me, and after some preliminary discourse, finding me to be a scholar, drew out a bundle of proposals, begging me to subscribe to a new edition he was going to give to the world of Propertius with notes. This demand necessarily produced a reply that I had no money; and that concession led him to inquire into the nature of my expectations. Finding that my expectations were just as great as my purse, I see, cried he, you are unacquainted with the town; I'll teach you a part of it. Look at these proposals,—upon these very proposals I have subsisted very comfortably for twelve years. The moment a nobleman returns from his travels, a Creolian arrives from Jamaica, or a dowager from her country-seat, I strike for a subscription. I first besiege their hearts with flattery, and then pour in my proposals at the breach. If they subscribe readily the first time, I renew my request to beg a dedication fee. If they let me have that, I smite them once more for engraving their coat of arms at the top. Thus, continued he, I live by vanity, and laugh at it. But between ourselves, I am now too well known: I should be glad to borrow your face a bit: a nobleman of distinction has just returned from Italy; my

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face is familiar to his porter; but if you bring this copy of verses, my life for it you succeed, and we divide the spoil.»

« Bless us, George,» cried I, « and is this the employment of poets now! Do men of their exalted talents thus stoop to beggary! Can they so far disgrace their calling as to make a vile traffic of praise for bread?»

« O no, sir,» returned he, « a true poet can never be so base; for wherever there is genius, there is pride. The creatures I now describe are only beggars in rhyme. The real poet, as he braves every hardship for fame, so he is equally a coward to contempt; and none but those who are unworthy protection, condescend to solicit it.

« Having a mind too proud to stoop to such indignities, and yet a fortune too humble to hazard a second attempt for fame, I was now obliged to take a middle course, and write for bread. But I was unqualified for a profession where mere industry alone was to ensure success. I could not suppress my lurking passion for applause; but usually consumed that time in efforts after excellence which takes up but little room, when it should have been more advantageously employed in the diffusive productions of fruitful mediocrity. My little piece would therefore come forth in the midst of periodical publications, unnoticed and unknown. The public were more importantly employed than to observe the easy simplicity of my style, or the harmony of my periods. Sheet after sheet was thrown off to oblivion. My essays were buried among the essays upon liberty, eastern tales, and cures for the bite of a mad dog; while Philautos, Philalethes, Philelutheros, and Philanthropos all wrote better, because they wrote faster than I.

« Now, therefore, I began to associate with none but disappointed authors, like myself, who praised, deplored, and

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despised each other. The satisfaction we found in every celebrated writer's attempts, was inversely as their merits. I found that no genius in another could please me. My unfortunate paradoxes had entirely dried up that source of comfort. I could neither read nor write with satisfaction; for excellence in another was my aversion, and writing was my trade.

« In the midst of these gloomy reflections, as I was one day sitting on a bench in St James's park, a young gentleman of distinction, who had been my intimate acquaintance at the university, approached me. We saluted each other with some hesitation; he almost ashamed of being known to one who made so shabby an appearance, and I afraid of a repulse. But my suspicions soon vanished; for Ned Thornhill was at the bottom a very good-natured fellow.»

« What did you say, George? » interrupted I.—« Thornhill, was not that his name? It can certainly be no other than my landlord.»—« Bless me,» cried Mrs Arnold, «is Mr Thornhill so near a neighbour of yours? He has long been a friend in our family, and we expect a visit from him shortly.»

« My friend's first care,» continued my son, « was to alter my appearance by a very fine suit of his own clothes, and then I was admitted to his table, upon the footing of half-friend, half-underling. My business was to attend him at auctions, to put him in spirits when he sat for his picture, to take the left hand in his chariot when not filled by another, and to assist at tattering a kip, as the phrase was, when we had a mind for a frolic. Besides this, I had twenty other little employments in the family. I was to do many small things without bidding; to carry the corkscrew; to stand godfather to all the butler's children; to

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sing when I was bid; to be never out of humour; always to be humble; and, if I could, to be very happy.

« In this honourable post, however, I was not without a rival. A captain of marines, who was formed for the place by nature, opposed me in my patron's affections. His mother had been laundress to a man of quality, and thus he early acquired a taste for pimping and pedigree. As this gentleman made it the study of his life to be acquainted with lords, though he was dismissed from several for his stupidity, yet he found many of them who were as dull as himself, that permitted his assiduities. As flattery was his trade, he practised it with the easiest address imaginable; but it came awkward and stiff from me: and as every day my patron's desire of flattery increased, so every hour being better acquainted with his defects, I became more unwilling to give it. Thus I was once more fairly going to give up the field to the captain, when my friend found occasion for my assistance. This was nothing less than to fight a duel for him, with a gentleman whose sister it was pretended he had used ill. I readily complied with his request, and though I see you are displeased at my conduct, yet as it was a debt indispensably due to friendship I could not refuse. I undertook the affair, disarmed my antagonist, and soon after had the pleasure of finding that the lady was only a woman of the town, and the fellow her bully and a sharper. This piece of service was repaid with the warmest professions of gratitude: but as my friend was to leave town in a few days, he knew no other method of serving me, but by recommending me to his uncle Sir William Thornhill, and another nobleman of great distinction who enjoyed a post under the government. When he was gone, my first care was to carry his recommendatory letter to his uncle, a man whose character for every virtue was

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universal, yet just. I was received by his servants with the most hospitable smiles; for the looks of the domestic ever transmit their master's benevolence. Being shown into a grand apartment, where Sir William soon came to me, I delivered my message and letter, which he read, and after pausing some minutes, Pray, sir, cried he, inform me what you have done for my kinsman to deserve this warm recommendation: but I suppose, sir, I guess your merits; you have fought for him; and so you would expect a reward from me for being the instrument of his vices. I wish, sincerely wish, that my present refusal may be some punishment for your guilt; but still more, that it may be some inducement to your repentance. —The severity of this rebuke I bore patiently, because I knew it was just. My whole expectations now, therefore, lay in my letter to the great man. As the doors of the nobility are almost ever beset with beggars, all ready to thrust in some sly petition, I found it no easy matter to gain admittance. However, after bribing the servants with half my worldly fortune, I was at last shown into a spacious apartment, my letter being previously sent up for his lordship's inspection. During this anxious interval I had full time to look round me. Every thing was grand and of happy contrivance; the paintings, the furniture, the gildings, petrified me with awe, and raised my idea of the owner. Ah, thought I to myself, how very great must the possessor of all these things be, who carries in his head the business of the state, and whose house displays half the wealth of a kingdom: sure his genius must be unfathomable!—During these awful reflections, I heard a step come heavily forward. Ah, this is the great man himself! No, it was only a chambermaid. Another foot was heard soon after. This must be he? No, it was

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only the great man's *valet de chambre*. At last his lordship actually made his appearance. Are you, cried he, the bearer of this here letter? I answered with a bow. I learn by this, continued he, as how that—But just at that instant a servant delivered him a card, and without taking further notice, he went out of the room, and left me to digest my own happiness at leisure: I saw no more of him, till told by a footman that his lordship was going to his coach at the door. Down I immediately followed and joined my voice to that of three or four more, who came, like me, to petition for favours. His lordship, however, went too fast for us, and was gaining his chariot door with large strides, when I hallooed out to know if I was to have any reply. He was by this time got in, and muttered an answer, half of which only I heard, the other half was lost in the rattling of his chariot wheels. I stood for some time with my neck stretched out, in the posture of one that was listening to catch the glorious sounds, till looking round me, I found myself alone at his lordship's gate.

« My patience,» continued my son, « was now quite exhausted: stung with the thousand indignities I had met with, I was willing to cast myself away, and only wanted the gulf to receive me. I regarded myself as one of those vile things that nature designed should be thrown by into her lumber-room, there to perish in obscurity. I had still, however, half a guinea left, and of that I thought fortune herself should not deprive me; but in order to be sure of this, I was resolved to go instantly and spend it while I had it, and then trust to occurrences for the rest. As I was going along with this resolution, it happened that Mr Crispe's office seemed invitingly open to give me a welcome reception. In this office, Mr Crispe kindly offers all his majesty's subjects a generous promise of 30*l.* a-year,

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for which promise all they give in return is their liberty for life, and permission to let him transport them to America as slaves. I was happy at finding a place where I could lose my fears in desperation, and entered this cell (for it had the appearance of one) with the devotion of a monastic. Here I found a number of poor creatures, all in circumstances like myself, expecting the arrival of Mr Crispe, presenting a true epitome of English impatience. Each untractable soul at variance with fortune, wreaked her injuries on their own hearts: but Mr Crispe at last came down, and all our murmurs were hushed. He deigned to regard me with an air of peculiar approbation, and indeed he was the first man who for a month past had talked to me with smiles. After a few questions, he found I was fit for every thing in the world. He paused a while upon the properest means of providing for me, and slapping his forehead as if he had found it, assured me, that there was at that time an embassy talked of from the synod of Pennsylvania to the Chickasaw Indians, and that he would use his interest to get me made secretary. I knew in my own heart that the fellow lied, and yet his promise gave me pleasure, there was something so magnificent in the sound. I fairly therefore divided my half-guinea, one half of which went to be added to his thirty thousand pounds, and with the other half I resolved to go to the next tavern, to be there more happy than he.

« As I was going out with that resolution, I was met at the door by the captain of a ship, with whom I had formerly some little acquaintance, and he agreed to be my companion over a bowl of punch. As I never chose to make a secret of my circumstances, he assured me that I was upon the very point of ruin, in listening to the office-keeper's promises; for that he only designed to sell me to

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the plantations. But, continued he, I fancy you might, by a much shorter voyage, be very easily put into a genteel way of bread. Take my advice. My ship sails to-morrow for Amsterdam. What if you go in her as a passenger? The moment you land, all you have to do is to teach the Dutchmen English, and I'll warrant you'll get pupils and money enough. I suppose you understand English, added he, by this time, or the deuce is in it. I confidently assured him of that; but expressed a doubt whether the Dutch would be willing to learn English. He affirmed with an oath that they were fond of it to distraction; and upon that affirmation I agreed with his proposal, and embarked the next day to teach the Dutch English in Holland. The wind was fair, our voyage short, and after having paid my passage with half my movables, I found myself, fallen as from the skies, a stranger in one of the principal streets of Amsterdam. In this situation I was unwilling to let any time pass unemployed in teaching. I addressed myself therefore to two or three of those I met, whose appearance seemed most promising; but it was impossible to make ourselves mutually understood. It was not till this very moment I recollected, that in order to teach the Dutchmen English, it was necessary that they should first teach me Dutch. How I came to overlook so obvious an objection is to me amazing; but certain it is I overlooked it.

« This scheme thus blown up, I had some thoughts of fairly shipping back to England again; but falling into company with an Irish student who was returning from Louvain, our conversation turning upon topics of literature (for by the way it may be observed, that I always forgot the meanness of my circumstances when I could converse upon such subjects), from him I learned that there were not two men in his whole university who un-

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derstood Greek. This amazed me. I instantly resolved to travel to Louvain, and there live by teaching Greek; and in this design I was heartened by my brother student, who threw out some hints that a fortune might be got by it.

« I set boldly forward the next morning. Every day lessened the burden of my movables, like Æsop and his basket of bread; for I paid them for my lodgings to the Dutch as I travelled on. When I came to Louvain, I was resolved not to go sneaking to the lower professors, but openly tendered my talents to the principal himself. I went, had admittance, and offered him my service as a master of the Greek language, which I had been told was a desideratum in his university. The principal seemed at first to doubt of my abilities; but of these I offered to convince him by turning a part of any Greek author he should fix upon into Latin. Finding me perfectly earnest in my proposal, he addressed me thus: You see me, young man; I never learned Greek and I don't find that I have ever missed it. ' I have had a doctor's cap and gown without Greek; I have ten thousand florins a-year without Greek; I eat heartily without Greek; and in short, continued he, as I don't know Greek, I do not believe there is any good in it.

« I was now too far from home to think of returning; so I resolved to go forward. I had some knowledge of music, with a tolerable voice, and now turned what was my amusement into a present means of subsistence. I passed among the harmless peasants of Flanders, and among such of the French as were poor enough to be very merry; for I ever found them sprightly in proportion to their wants. Whenever I approached a peasant's house towards nightfall, I played one of my most merry tunes, and that procured me not only a lodging, but subsistence for the next day. I

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once or twice attempted to play for people of fashion; but they always thought my performance odious, and never rewarded me even with a trifle. This was to me the more extraordinary, as whenever I used in better days to play for company, when playing was my amusement, my music never failed to throw them into raptures, and the ladies especially; but as it was now my only means, it was received with contempt—a proof how ready the world is to underrate those talents by which a man is supported.

« In this manner I proceeded to Paris, with no design but just to look about me, and then to go forward. The people of Paris are much fonder of strangers that have money than of those that have wit. As I could not boast much of either, I was no great favourite. After walking about the town four or five days and seeing the outsides of the best houses, I was preparing to leave this retreat of venal hospitality, when passing through one of the principal streets, whom should I meet but our cousin, to whom you first recommended me. This meeting was very agreeable to me, and I believe not displeasing to him. He inquired into the nature of my journey to Paris, and informed me of his own business there, which was to collect pictures, medals, intaglios, and antiques of all kinds for a gentleman in London, who had just stepped into taste and a large fortune. I was the more surprised at seeing our cousin pitched upon for this office, as he himself had often assured me he knew nothing of the matter. Upon asking how he had been taught the art of a cognoscente so very suddenly, he assured me that nothing was more easy. The whole secret consisted in a strict adherence to two rules: the one, always to observe the picture might have been better if the painter had taken more pains; and the other, to praise the works of Pietro Perugino. But,

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says he, as I once taught you how to be an author in London, I'll now undertake to instruct you in the art of picture-buying at Paris.

« With this proposal I very readily closed, as it was living, and now all my ambition was to live. I went therefore to his lodgings, improved my dress by his assistance, and after some time accompanied him to auctions of pictures, where the English gentry were expected to be purchasers. I was not a little surprised at his intimacy with people of the best fashion, who referred themselves to his judgment upon every picture or medal, as to an unerring standard of taste. He made very good use of my assistance upon these occasions; for when asked his opinion, he would gravely take me aside and ask mine, shrug, look wise, return, and assure the company that he could give no opinion upon an affair of so much importance. Yet there was sometimes an occasion for a more supported assurance. I remember to have seen him, after giving his opinion that the colouring of a picture was not mellow enough, very deliberately take a brush with brown varnish, that was accidentally lying by, and rub it over the piece with great composure before all the company, and then ask if he had not improved the tints.

« When he had finished his commission in Paris, he left me strongly recommended to several men of distinction, as a person very proper for a travelling tutor; and after some time I was employed in that capacity by a gentleman who brought his ward to Paris, in order to set him forward on his tour through Europe. I was to be the young gentleman's governor, but with a proviso that he should always be permitted to govern himself. My pupil in fact understood the art of guiding in money concerns much better than I. He was heir to a fortune of about two hundred thou-

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sand pounds, left him by an uncle in the West Indies; and his guardians, to qualify him for the management of it, had bound him apprentice to an attorney. Thus avarice was his prevailing passion: all his questions on the road were, how money might be saved; which was the least expensive course of travel; whether any thing could be bought that would turn to account when disposed of again in London? Such curiosities on the way as could be seen for nothing, he was ready enough to look at; but if the sight of them was to be paid for, he usually asserted that he had been told they were not worth seeing. He never paid a bill that he would not observe how amazingly expensive travelling was, and all this though he was not yet twenty-one. When arrived at Leghorn, as we took a walk to look at the port and shipping, he inquired the expense of the passage by sea home to England. This he was informed was but a trifle compared to his returning by land; he was therefore unable to withstand the temptation; so paying me the small part of my salary that was due, he took leave, and embarked with only one attendant for London.

« I now therefore was left once more upon the world at large; but then it was a thing I was used to. However, my skill in music could avail me nothing in a country where every peasant was a better musician than I; but by this time I had acquired another talent which answered my purpose as well, and this was a skill in disputation. In all the foreign universities and convents there are, upon certain days, philosophical theses maintained against every adventitious disputant; for which, if the champion opposes with any dexterity, he can claim a gratuity in money, a dinner, and a bed for one night. In this manner, therefore, I fought my way towards England, walked along from city to city, examined mankind more nearly, and, if I may so

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express it, saw both sides of the picture. My remarks, however, are but few: I found that monarchy was the best government for the poor to live in, and commonwealths for the rich. I found that riches in general were in every country another name for freedom; and that no man is so fond of liberty himself, as not to be desirous of subjecting the will of some individuals in society to his own.

« Upon my arrival in England I resolved to pay my respects first to you, and then to enlist as a volunteer in the first expedition that was going forward; but on my journey down my resolutions were changed, by meeting an old acquaintance, who I found belonged to a company of comedians that were going to make a summer campaign in the country. The company seemed not much to disapprove of me for an associate. They all, however, apprized me of the importance of the task at which I aimed; that the public was a many-headed monster, and that only such as had very good heads could please it; that acting was not to be learned in a day, and that without some traditional shrugs, which had been on the stage, and only on the stage, these hundred years, I could never pretend to please. The next difficulty was in fitting me with parts, as almost every character was in keeping. I was driven for some time from one character to another, till at last Horatio was fixed upon, which the presence of the present company has happily hindered me from acting. »

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CHAPTER XXI.

The short continuance of Friendship amongst the Vicious, which is coeval only with mutual Satisfaction.

My son's account was too long to be delivered at once; the first part of it was begun that night, and he was concluding the rest after dinner the next day, when the appearance of Mr Thornhill's equipage at the door seemed to make a pause in the general satisfaction. The butler, who was now become my friend in the family, informed me with a whisper, that the 'Squire had already made some overtures to Miss Wilmot, and that her aunt and uncle seemed highly to approve the match. Upon Mr Thornhill's entering, he seemed, at seeing my son and me, to start back; but I readily imputed that to surprise, and not displeasure. However, upon our advancing to salute him, he returned our greeting with the most apparent candour; and after a short time his presence served only to increase the general good humour.

After tea he called me aside to inquire after my daughter; but upon my informing him that my inquiry was unsuccessful, he seemed greatly surprised; adding, that he had been since frequently at my house in order to comfort the rest of my family, whom he left perfectly well. He then asked if I had communicated her misfortune to Miss Wilmot or my son; and upon my replying that I had not told them

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as yet, he greatly approved my prudence and precaution, desiring me by all means to keep it a secret: « For at best, » cried he, « it is but divulging one's own infamy; and perhaps Miss Livy may not be so guilty as we all imagine. » We were here interrupted by a servant, who came to ask the 'Squire in, to stand up at country dances; so that he left me quite pleased with the interest he seemed to take in my concerns. His addresses, however, to Miss Wilmot, were too obvious to be mistaken: and yet she seemed not perfectly pleased, but bore them rather in compliance to the will of her aunt than from real inclination. I had even the satisfaction to see her lavish some kind looks upon my unfortunate son, which the other could neither extort by his fortune nor assiduity. Mr Thornhill's seeming composure, however, not a little surprised me: we had now continued here a week at the pressing instances of Mr Arnold: but each day the more tenderness Miss Wilmot showed my son, Mr Thornhill's friendship seemed proportionably to increase for him.

He had formerly made us the most kind assurances of using his interest to serve the family; but now his generosity was not confined to promises alone. The morning I designed for my departure, Mr Thornhill came to me with looks of real pleasure, to inform me of a piece of service he had done for his friend George. This was nothing less than his having procured him an ensign's commission in one of the regiments that was going to the West Indies, for which he had promised but one hundred pounds, his interest having been sufficient to get an abatement of the other two. « As for this trifling piece of service, » continued the young gentleman, « I desire no other reward but the pleasure of having served my friend; and

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as for the hundred pounds to be paid, if you are unable to raise it yourselves, I will advance it, and you shall repay me at your leisure.» This was a favour we wanted words to express our sense of: I readily therefore gave my bond for the money, and testified as much gratitude as if I never intended to pay.

George was to depart for town the next day to secure his commission, in pursuance of his generous patron's directions, who judged it highly expedient to use dispatch, lest in the mean time another should step in with more advantageous proposals. The next morning therefore our young soldier was early prepared for his departure, and seemed the only person among us that was not affected by it. Neither the fatigues and dangers he was going to encounter, nor the friends and mistress—for Miss Wilmot actually loved him—he was leaving behind, any way damped his spirits. After he had taken leave of the rest of the company, I gave him all I had, my blessing. «And now, my boy,» cried I, «thou art going to fight for thy country, remember how thy brave grandfather fought for his sacred king, when loyalty among Britons was a virtue. Go, my boy, and imitate him in all but his misfortunes, if it was a misfortune to die with Lord Falkland. Go, my boy, and if you fall, though distant, exposed, and unwept by those that love you, the most precious tears are those with which Heaven bedews the unburied head of a soldier.»

The next morning I took leave of the good family, that had been kind enough to entertain me so long, not without several expressions of gratitude to Mr Thornhill for his late bounty. I left them in the enjoyment of all that happiness which affluence and good-breeding procure, and returned

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towards home, despairing of ever finding my daughter more, but sending a sigh to Heaven to spare and to forgive her. I was now come within about twenty miles of home, having hired a horse to carry me, as I was yet but weak, and comforted myself with the hopes of soon seeing all I held dearest upon earth. But the night coming on, I put up at a little public-house by the road side, and asked for the landlord's company over a pint of wine. We sat beside his kitchen fire, which was the best room in the house, and chatted on politics and the news of the country. We happened, among other topics, to talk of young 'Squire Thornhill, who, the host assured me, was hated as much as his uncle Sir William, who sometimes came down to the country, was loved. He went on to observe, that he made it his whole study to betray the daughters of such as received him to their houses, and after a fortnight or three weeks' possession, turned them out unrewarded and abandoned to the world. As we continued our discourse in this manner, his wife, who had been out to get change, returned, and perceiving that her husband was enjoying a pleasure in which she was not a sharer, she asked him, in an angry tone, what he did there? to which he only replied in an ironical way, by drinking her health. « Mr Symmonds,» cried she, « you use me very ill, and I'll bear it no longer. Here three parts of the business is left for me to do, and the fourth left unfinished; while you do nothing but soak with the guests all day long: whereas if a spoonful of liquor were to cure me of a fever, I never touch a drop.» I now found what she would be at, and immediately poured her out a glass, which she received with a courtesy, and drinking towards my good health, « Sir,» resumed she, « it is not so much for the value of the liquor

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I am angry, but one cannot help it when the house is going out of the windows. If the customers or guests are to be dunned, all the burden lies upon my back; he'd as lief eat that glass as budge after them himself. There, now, above stairs, we have a young woman who has come to take up her lodgings here, and I don't believe she has got any money by her over civility. I am certain she is very slow of payment, and I wish she were put in mind of it.» —« What signifies minding her,» cried the host, « if she be slow she is sure.»—« I don't know that,» replied the wife; « but I know that I am sure she has been here a fortnight, and we have not yet seen the cross of her money.»—« I suppose, my dear,» cried he, « we shall have it all in a lump.» —« In a lump!» cried the other, « I hope we may get it any way; and that I am resolved we will this very night, or out she tramps, bag and baggage.»—« Consider, my dear,» cried the husband, « she is a gentlewoman, and deserves more respect.»—« As for the matter of that,» returned the hostess, « gentle or simple, out she shall pack with a sassarara. Gentry may be good things where they take; but for my part, I never saw much good of them at the sign of the Harrow.»—Thus saying, she ran up a narrow flight of stairs that went from the kitchen to a room over-head; and I soon perceived, by the loudness of her voice, and the bitterness of her reproaches, that no money was to be had from her lodger. I could hear her remonstrances very distinctly: « Out, I say; pack out this moment! tramp, thou infamous strumpet, or I'll give thee a mark thou won't be the better for this three months. What! you trumpery, to come and take up an honest house without cross or coin to bless yourself with; come along, I say.»—« O dear madam,» cried the stranger,

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« pity me, pity a poor abandoned creature for one night, and death will soon do the rest.»—I instantly knew the voice of my poor ruined child Olivia. I flew to her rescue, while the woman was dragging her along by the hair, and I caught the dear forlorn wretch in my arms.—« Welcome, any way welcome, my dearest lost one, my treasure, to your poor old father's bosom! Though the vicious forsake thee, there is yet one in the world that will never forsake thee; though thou hadst ten thousand crimes to answer for, he will forget them all.»—« O my own dear»—for minutes she could say no more—« my own dearest good papa! could angels be kinder! how do I deserve so much! —The villain, I hate him and myself, to be a reproach to such goodness. You can't forgive me, I know you cannot.» —« Yes, my child, from my heart I do forgive thee! Only repent, and we both shall yet be happy. We shall see many pleasant days yet, my Olivia!»—« Ah! never, sir, never. The rest of my wretched life must be infamy abroad, and shame at home. But, alas! papa, you look much paler than you used to do. Could such a thing as I am give you so much uneasiness? Surely you have too much wisdom to take the miseries of my guilt upon yourself.»—« Our wisdom, young woman,» replied I—« Ah, why so cold a name, papa?» cried she. « This is the first time you ever called me by so cold a name.»—« I ask pardon, my darling,» returned I; « but I was going to observe, that wisdom makes but a slow defence against trouble, though at last a sure one.» The landlady now returned to know if we did not choose a more genteel apartment; to which assenting, we were shown a room where we could converse more freely. After we had talked ourselves into some degree of tranquillity, I could not

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avoid desiring some account of the gradations that led to her present wretched situation. « That villain, sir, » said she, « from the first day of our meeting, made me honourable though private proposals. »

« Villain, indeed! » cried I: « and yet it in some measure surprises me, how a person of Mr Burchell's good sense and seeming honour could be guilty of such deliberate baseness, and thus step into a family to undo it. »

« My dear papa, » returned my daughter, « you labour under a strange mistake. Mr Burchell never attempted to deceive me; instead of that, he took every opportunity of privately admonishing me against the artifices of Mr Thornhill, who I now find was even worse than he represented him. »—« Mr Thornhill! » interrupted I; « can it be? »—« Yes, sir, » returned she; « it was Mr Thornhill who seduced me; who employed the two ladies, as he called them, but who in fact were abandoned women of the town, without breeding or pity, to decoy us up to London. Their artifices you may remember would have certainly succeeded, but for Mr Burchell's letter, who directed those reproaches at them, which we all applied to ourselves. How he came to have so much influence as to defeat their intentions, still remains a secret to me; but I am convinced he was ever our warmest, sincerest friend. »

« You amaze me, my dear, » cried I; « but now I find my first suspicions of Mr Thornhill's baseness were too well grounded: but he can triumph in security; for he is rich and we are poor. But tell me, my child, sure it was no small temptation that could thus obliterate all the impressions of such an education, and so virtuous a disposition as thine. »

« Indeed, sir, » replied she, « he owes all his triumph to

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the desire I had of making him, and not myself, happy. I knew that the ceremony of our marriage, which was privately performed by a popish priest, was no way binding, and that I had nothing to trust to but his honour.» — «What!» interrupted I, «and were you indeed married by a priest, and in orders?»—«Indeed, sir, we were,» replied she, «though we were both sworn to conceal his name.»—«Why, then, my child, come to my arms again; and now you are a thousand times more welcome than before; for you are now his wife to all intents and purposes; nor can all the laws of man, though written upon tables of adamant, lessen the force of that sacred connexion.»

«Alas, papa,» replied she, «you are but little acquainted with his villanies; he has been married already by the same priest to six or eight wives more, whom, like me, he has deceived and abandoned.»

«Has he so?» cried I, «then we must hang the priest, and you shall inform against him to-morrow.» — «But, sir,» returned she, «will that be right, when I am sworn to secrecy?»—«My dear,» I replied, «if you have made such a promise, I cannot, nor will I tempt you to break it. Even though it may benefit the public, you must not inform against him. In all human institutions a smaller evil is allowed to procure a greater good; as in politics, a province may be given away to secure a kingdom; in medicine, a limb may be lopped off to preserve the body: but in religion, the law is written, and inflexible, *never* to do evil. And this law, my child, is right; for otherwise, if we commit a smaller evil to procure a greater good, certain guilt would be thus incurred, in expectation of contingent advantage. And though the adva[illegible]e should certainly

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follow, yet the interval between commission and advantage, which is allowed to be guilty, may be that in which we are called away to answer for the things we have done, and the volume of human actions is closed for ever. But I interrupt you, my dear; go on.»

«The very next morning,» continued she, «I found what little expectation I was to have from his sincerity. That very morning he introduced me to two unhappy women more, whom, like me, he had deceived, but who lived in contented prostitution. I loved him too tenderly to bear such rivals in his affections, and strove to forget my infamy in a tumult of pleasures. With this view I danced, dressed, and talked; but still was unhappy. The gentlemen who visited there told me every moment of the power of my charms, and this only contributed to increase my melancholy, as I had thrown all their power quite away. Thus each day I grew more pensive, and he more insolent, till at last the monster had the assurance to offer me to a young baronet of his acquaintance. Need I describe, sir, how his ingratitude stung me? My answer to this proposal was almost madness. I desired to part. As I was going, he offered me a purse; but I flung it at him with indignation, and burst from him in a rage, that for a while kept me insensible of the miseries of my situation. But I soon looked round me, and saw myself a vile, abject, guilty thing, without one friend in the world to apply to. Just in that interval a stage-coach happening to pass by, I took a place, it being my aim to be driven at a distance from a wretch I despised and detested. I was set down here, where, since my arrival, my own anxiety and this woman's unkindness have been my only companions. The hours of pleasure that I have passed with my mamma

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and sister now grow painful to me. Their sorrows are much; but mine are greater than theirs, for mine are mixed with guilt and infamy.»

« Have patience, my child,» cried I, « and I hope things will yet be better. Take some repose to-night, and to-morrow I'll carry you home to your mother and the rest of the family, from whom you will receive a kind reception.—Poor woman! this has gone to her heart: but she loves you still, Olivia, and will forget it.»

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CHAPTER XXII.

Offences are easily pardoned where there is Love at bottom.

THE next morning I took my daughter behind me, and set out on my return home. As we travelled along, I strove by every persuasion to calm her sorrows and fears, and to arm her with resolution to bear the presence of her offended mother. I took every opportunity, from the prospect of a fine country, through which we passed, to observe how much kinder Heaven was to us than we to each other, and that the misfortunes of nature's making were very few. I assured her, that she should never perceive any change in my affections, and that during my life, which yet might be long, she might depend upon a guardian and an instructor. I armed her against the censures of the world, showed her that books were sweet unreproaching companions to the miserable, and that if they could not bring us to enjoy life, they would at least teach us to endure it.

The hired horse that we rode was to be put up that night at an inn by the way, within about five miles from my house; and as I was willing to prepare my family for my daughter's reception, I determined to leave her that night at the inn, and to return for her, accompanied by my daughter Sophia, early the next morning. It was night

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before we reached our appointed stage: however, after seeing her provided with a decent apartment, and having ordered the hostess to prepare proper refreshments, I kissed her, and proceeded towards home. And now my heart caught new sensations of pleasure the nearer I approached that peaceful mansion. As a bird that had been frighted from its nest, my affections outwent my haste, and hovered round my little fire-side with all the rapture of expectation. I called up the many fond things I had to say, and anticipated the welcome I was to receive. I already felt my wife's tender embrace, and smiled at the joy of my little ones. As I walked but slowly, the night waned apace. The labourers of the day were all retired to rest; the lights were out in every cottage; no sounds were heard but of the shrilling cock, and the deep-mouthed watch-dog at hollow distance. I approached my little abode of pleasure, and before I was within a furlong of the place, our honest mastiff came running to welcome me.

It was now near midnight that I came to knock at my door;—all was still and silent;—my heart dilated with unutterable happiness, when, to my amazement, I saw the house bursting out in a blaze of fire, and every aperture red with conflagration! I gave a loud convulsive outcry, and fell upon the pavement insensible. This alarmed my son, who had till this been asleep, and he perceiving the flames, instantly waked my wife and daughter; and all running out, naked, and wild with apprehension, recalled me to life with their anguish. But it was only to objects of new terror; for the flames had by this time caught the roof of our dwelling, part after part continuing to fall in, while the family stood with silent agony looking on as if they enjoyed the blaze. I gazed upon them and upon it

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by turns, and then looked round me for my two little ones; but they were not to be seen. O misery! « Where,» cried I, « where are my little ones?»—« They are burnt to death in the flames,» says my wife, calmly, « and I will die with them.»—That moment I heard the cry of the babes within, who were just awaked by the fire, and nothing could have stopped me. « Where, where are my children?» cried I, rushing through the flames, and bursting the door of the chamber in which they were confined; « Where are my little ones?»—« Here, dear papa, here we are,» cried they together, while the flames were just catching the bed where they lay. I caught them both in my arms, and snatched them through the fire as fast as possible, while, just as I was got out, the roof sunk in. « Now,» cried I, holding up my children, « now let the flames burn on, and all my possessions perish. Here they are; I have saved my treasure. Here, my dearest, here are our treasures, and we shall yet be happy.» We kissed our little darlings a thousand times; they clasped us round the neck, and seemed to share our transports, while their mother laughed and wept by turns.

I now stood a calm spectator of the flames, and after some time began to perceive that my arm to the shoulder was scorched in a terrible manner. It was therefore out of my power to give my son any assistance, either in attempting to save our goods, or preventing the flames spreading to our corn. By this time the neighbours were alarmed, and came running to our assistance; but all they could do was to stand, like us, spectators of the calamity. My goods, among which were the notes I had reserved for my daughters' fortunes, were entirely consumed, except a box with some papers that stood in the kitchen, and two or three things more of little consequence, which my son

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brought away in the beginning. The neighbours contributed, however, what they could to lighten our distress. They brought us clothes, and furnished one of our outhouses with kitchen utensils; so that by daylight we had another, though a wretched dwelling, to retire to. My honest next neighbour and his children were not the least assiduous in providing us with every thing necessary, and offering whatever consolation untutored benevolence could suggest.

When the fears of my family had subsided, curiosity to know the cause of my long stay began to take place: having therefore informed them of every particular, I proceeded to prepare them for the reception of our lost one, and though we had nothing but wretchedness now to impart, I was willing to procure her a welcome to what we had. This task would have been more difficult but for our recent calamity, which had humbled my wife's pride, and blunted it by more poignant afflictions. Being unable to go for my poor child myself, as my arm grew very painful, I sent my son and daughter, who soon returned, supporting the wretched delinquent, who had not the courage to look up at her mother, whom no instructions of mine could persuade to a perfect reconciliation; for women have a much stronger sense of female error than men. « Ah, madam,» cried her mother, « this is but a poor place you are come to after so much finery. My daughter Sophy and I can afford but little entertainment to persons who have kept company only with people of distinction. Yes, Miss Livy, your poor father and I have suffered very much of late; but I hope Heaven will forgive you.» During this reception, the unhappy victim stood pale and trembling, unable to weep or to reply: but I could not continue a silent spectator of her distress;

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wherefore, assuming a degree of severity in my voice and manner, which was ever followed with instant submission, « I entreat, woman, that my words may be now marked once for all: I have here brought you back a poor deluded wanderer; her return to duty demands the revival of our tenderness. The real hardships of life are now coming fast upon us; let us not, therefore, increase them by dissension among each other. If we live harmoniously together we may yet be contented, as there are enough of us to shut out the censuring world, and keep each other in countenance. The kindness of Heaven is promised to the penitent, and let ours be directed by the example. Heaven, we are assured, is much more pleased to view a repentant sinner, than ninety-nine persons who have supported a course of undeviating rectitude. And this is right; for that single effort by which we stop short in the down-hill path to perdition, is itself a greater exertion of virtue than a hundred acts of justice. »

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CHAPTER XXIII.

None but the guilty can be long and completely miserable.

Some assiduity was now required to make our present abode as convenient as possible, and we were soon again qualified to enjoy our former serenity. Being disabled myself from assisting my son in our usual occupations, I read to my family from the few books that were saved, and particularly from such as, by amusing the imagination, contributed to ease the heart. Our good neighbours, too, came every day with the kindest condolence, and fixed a time in which they were all to assist at repairing my former dwelling. Honest Farmer Williams was not last among these visitors; but heartily offered his friendship. He would even have renewed his addresses to my daughter; but she rejected him in such a manner as totally repressed his future solicitations.—Her grief seemed formed for continuing, and she was the only person of our little society that a week did not restore to cheerfulness. She now lost that unblushing innocence which once taught her to respect herself, and to seek pleasure by pleasing.—Anxiety now had taken strong possession of her mind; her beauty began to be impaired with her constitution, and neglect still more contributed to diminish it. Every tender epithet bestowed on her sister brought a pang to her heart and a tear to her eye; and as

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one vice, though cured, ever plants others where it has been, so her former guilt, though driven out by repentance, left jealousy and envy behind. I strove a thousand ways to lessen her care, and even forgot my own pain in a concern for hers, collecting such amusing passages of history as a strong memory and some reading could suggest.—« Our happiness, my dear, » I would say, « is in the power of one who can bring it about a thousand unforeseen ways that mock our foresight. If example be necessary to prove this, I'll give you a story, my child, told us by a grave, though sometimes a romancing, historian.

« Matilda was married very young to a Neapolitan nobleman of the first quality, and found herself a widow and a mother at the age of fifteen. As she stood one day caressing her infant son in the open window of an apartment which hung over the river Volturna, the child with a sudden spring leaped from her arms into the flood below, and disappeared in a moment. The mother, struck with instant surprise, and making an effort to save him, plunged in after; but far from being able to assist the infant, she herself with great difficulty escaped to the opposite shore, just when some French soldiers were plundering the country on that side, who immediately made her their prisoner.

« As the war was then carried on between the French and Italians with the utmost inhumanity, they were going at once to perpetrate those two extremes suggested by appetite and cruelty. This base resolution however was opposed by a young officer, who, though their retreat required the utmost expedition, placed her behind him, and brought her in safety to his native city. Her beauty at first caught his eye, her merit soon after his heart. They were married: he rose to the highest posts; they lived long

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together, and were happy. But the felicity of a soldier can never be called permanent: after an interval of several years, the troops which he commanded having met with a repulse, he was obliged to take shelter in the city where he had lived with his wife. Here they suffered a siege, and the city at length was taken. Few histories can produce more various instances of cruelty than those which the French and Italians at that time exercised upon each other. It was resolved by the victors, upon this occasion, to put all the French prisoners to death; but particularly the husband of the unfortunate Matilda, as he was principally instrumental in protracting the siege. Their determinations were in general executed almost as soon as resolved upon. The captive soldier was led forth, and the executioner with his sword stood ready, while the spectators in gloomy silence awaited the fatal blow, which was only suspended till the general, who presided as judge, should give the signal. It was in this interval of anguish and expectation that Matilda came to take her last farewell of her husband and deliverer, deploring her wretched situation, and the cruelty of fate, that had saved her from perishing by a premature death in the river Volturna, to be the spectator of still greater calamities. The general, who was a young man, was struck with surprise at her beauty, and pity at her distress; but with still stronger emotions when he heard her mention her former dangers. He was her son, the infant for whom she had encountered so much danger. He acknowledged her at once as his mother, and fell at her feet. The rest may be easily supposed: the captive was set free, and all the happiness that love, friendship, and duty, could confer on each, were united.»

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In this manner I would attempt to amuse my daughter, but she listened with divided attention; for her own misfortunes engrossed all the pity she once had for those of another, and nothing gave her ease. In company she dreaded contempt; and in solitude she only found anxiety. Such was the colour of her wretchedness, when we received certain information that Mr Thornhill was going to be married to Miss Wilmot, for whom I always suspected he had a real passion, though he took every opportunity before me to express his contempt both of her person and fortune. This news only served to increase poor Olivia's affliction: such a flagrant breach of fidelity was more than her courage could support. I was resolved, however, to get more certain information, and to defeat if possible the completion of his designs, by sending my son to old Mr Wilmot's, with instructions to know the truth of the report, and to deliver Miss Wilmot a letter, intimating Mr Thornhill's conduct in my family. My son went in pursuance of my directions, and in three days returned, assuring us of the truth of the account; but that he had found it impossible to deliver the letter, which he was therefore obliged to leave, as Mr Thornhill and Miss Wilmot were visiting round the country. They were to be married, he said, in a few days, having appeared together at church the Sunday before he was there, in great splendour, the bride attended by six young ladies, and he by as many gentlemen. Their approaching nuptials filled the whole country with rejoicing, and they usually rode out together in the grandest equipage that had been seen in the country for many years. All the friends of both families, he said, were there, particularly the 'Squire's uncle, Sir William Thornhill, who bore so good a character. He added, that nothing but

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mirth and feasting were going forward; that all the country praised the young bride's beauty, and the bridegroom's fine person, and that they were immensely fond of each other; concluding, that he could not help thinking Mr Thornhill one of the most happy men in the world.

«Why, let him, if he can,» returned I: «but, my son, observe this bed of straw, and unsheltering roof; those mouldering walls, and humid floor; my wretched body thus disabled by fire, and my children weeping round me for bread;—you have come home, my child, to all this; yet here, even here, you see a man that would not for a thousand worlds exchange situations. O, my children, if you could but learn to commune with your own hearts, and know what noble company you can make them, you would little regard the elegance and splendour of the worthless. Almost all men have been taught to call life a passage, and themselves the travellers. The similitude still may be improved, when we observe that the good are joyful and serene, like travellers that are going towards home; the wicked but by intervals happy, like travellers that are going into exile.»

My compassion for my poor daughter, overpowered by this new disaster, interrupted what I had further to observe. I bade her mother support her, and after a short time she recovered. She appeared from that time more calm, and I imagined had gained a new degree of resolution: but appearances deceived me; for her tranquillity was the languor of over-wrought resentment. A supply of provisions, charitably sent us by my kind parishioners, seemed to diffuse new cheerfulness among the rest of the family, nor was I displeased at seeing them once more sprightly and at ease. It would have been unjust to damp

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their satisfactions, merely to condole with resolute melancholy, or to burden them with a sadness they did not feel. Thus once more the tale went round, and the song was demanded, and cheerfulness condescended to hover round our little habitation.

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CHAPTER XXIV.

Fresh Calamities.

The next morning the sun arose with peculiar warmth for the season, so that we agreed to breakfast together on the honey-suckle bank; where, while we sat, my youngest daughter at my request joined her voice to the concert on the trees about us. It was in this place my poor Olivia first met her seducer, and every object served to recall her sadness. But that melancholy which is excited by objects of pleasure, or inspired by sounds of harmony, soothes the heart instead of corroding it. Her mother, too, upon this occasion, felt a pleasing distress, and wept, and loved her daughter as before. «Do, my pretty Olivia,» cried she, «let us have that little melancholy air your papa was so fond of; your sister Sophy has already obliged us. Do, child, it will please your old father.» She complied in a manner so exquisitely pathetic as moved me.

When lovely woman stoops to folly,
And finds too late that men betray,
What charm can soothe her melancholy,
What art can wash her guilt away?

The only art her guilt to cover,
To hide her shame from every eye,
To give repentance to her lover,
And wring his bosom—is to die.

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As she was concluding the last stanza, to which an interruption in her voice from sorrow gave peculiar softness, the appearance of Mr Thornhill's equipage at a distance alarmed us all, but particularly increased the uneasiness of my eldest daughter, who, desirous of shunning her betrayer, returned to the house with her sister. In a few minutes he was alighted from his chariot, and making up to the place where I was still sitting, inquired after my health with his usual air of familiarity. « Sir, » replied I, « your present assurance only serves to aggravate the baseness of your character; and there was a time when I would have chastised your insolence for presuming thus to appear before me. But now you are safe; for age has cooled my passions, and my calling restrains them. »

« I vow, my dear sir, » returned he, « I am amazed at all this; nor can I understand what it means! I hope you don't think your daughter's late excursion with me had any thing criminal in it? »

« Go, » cried I, « thou art a wretch, a poor pitiful wretch, and every way a liar: but your meanness secures you from my anger! Yet, sir, I am descended from a family that would not have borne this!—And so, thou vile thing, to gratify a momentary passion, thou hast made one poor creature wretched for life, and polluted a family that had nothing but honour for their portion! »

« If she or you, » returned he, « are resolved to be miserable, I cannot help it. But you may still be happy; and whatever opinion you may have formed of me, you shall ever find me ready to contribute to it. We can marry her to another in a short time, and what is more, she may keep her lover beside; for I protest I shall ever continue to have a true regard for her. »

I found all my passions alarmed at this new degrading

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proposal; for though the mind may often be calm under great injuries, little villany can at any time get within the soul, and sting it into rage.—« Avoid my sight, thou reptile!» cried I, « nor continue to insult me with thy presence. Were my brave son at home he would not suffer this; but I am old and disabled, and every way undone.»

« I find,» cried he, « you are bent upon obliging me to talk in a harsher manner than I intended. But as I have shown you what may be hoped from my friendship, it may not be improper to represent what may be the consequences of my resentment. My attorney, to whom your late bond has been transferred, threatens hard, nor do I know how to prevent the course of justice, except by paying the money myself, which, as I have been at some expenses lately, previous to my intended marriage, is not so easy to be done. And then my steward talks of driving for the rent: it is certain he knows his duty; for I never trouble myself with affairs of that nature. Yet still I could wish to serve you, and even to have you and your daughter present at my marriage, which is shortly to be solemnized with Miss Wilmot; it is even the request of my charming Arabella herself, whom I hope you will not refuse.»

« Mr Thornhill,» replied I, « hear me once for all: As to your marriage with any but my daughter, that I never will consent to; and though your friendship could raise me to a throne, or your resentment sink me to the grave, yet would I despise both. Thou hast once wofully, irreparably deceived me. I reposed my heart upon thine honour, and have found its baseness. Never more therefore expect friendship from me. Go, and possess what fortune has given thee, beauty, riches, health, and pleasure. Go, and leave me to want, infamy, disease, and sorrow. Yet,

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humbled as I am, shall my heart still vindicate its dignity; and though thou hast my forgiveness, thou shalt ever have my contempt.»

«If so,» returned he, «depend upon it you shall feel the effects of this insolence; and we shall shortly see which is the fittest object of scorn, you or me.»—Upon which he departed abruptly.

My wife and son, who were present at this interview, seemed terrified with the apprehension. My daughters also, finding that he was gone, came out to be informed of the result of our conference, which, when known, alarmed them not less than the rest. But as to myself, I disregarded the utmost stretch of his malevolence: he had already struck the blow, and now I stood prepared to repel every new effort; like one of those instruments used in the art of war, which, however thrown, still presents a point to receive the enemy.

We soon however found that he had not threatened in vain: for the very next morning his steward came to demand my annual rent, which, by the train of accidents already related, I was unable to pay. The consequence of my incapacity was his driving my cattle that evening, and their being appraised and sold the next day for less than half their value. My wife and children now therefore entreated me to comply upon any terms, rather than incur certain destruction. They even begged of me to admit his visits once more, and used all their little eloquence to paint the calamities I was going to endure;—the terrors of a prison in so rigorous a season as the present, with the danger that threatened my health from the late accident that happened by the fire. But I continued inflexible.

«Why, my treasures,» cried I, «why will you thus attempt to persuade me to the thing that is not right! My

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duty has taught me to forgive him; but my conscience will not permit me to approve. Would you have me applaud to the world what my heart must internally condemn? Would you have me tamely sit down and flatter our infamous betrayer; and, to avoid a prison, continually suffer the more galling bonds of mental confinement? No, never. If we are to be taken from this abode, only let us hold to the right; and wherever we are thrown, we can still retire to a charming apartment, when we can look round our own hearts with intrepidity and with pleasure!»

In this manner we spent that evening. Early the next morning, as the snow had fallen in great abundance in the night, my son was employed in clearing it away, and opening a passage before the door. He had not been thus engaged long, when he came running in, with looks all pale, to tell us that two strangers, whom he knew to be officers of justice, were making towards the house.

Just as he spoke they came in, and approaching the bed where I lay, after previously informing me of their employment and business, made me their prisoner, bidding me prepare to go with them to the county gaol, which was eleven miles off.

« My friends,» said I, « this is severe weather in which you have come to take me to a prison; and it is particularly unfortunate at this time, as one of my arms has lately been burnt in a terrible manner, and it has thrown me into a slight fever, and I want clothes to cover me; and I am now too weak and old to walk far in such deep snow; but if it must be so———»

I then turned to my wife and children, and directed them to get together what few things were left us, and to prepare immediately for leaving this place. I entreated

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them to be expeditious, and desired my son to assist his eldest sister, who, from a consciousness that she was the cause of all our calamities, was fallen, and had lost anguish in insensibility. I encouraged my wife, who, pale and trembling, clasped our affrighted little ones in her arms, that clung to her bosom in silence, dreading to look round at the strangers. In the mean time my youngest daughter prepared for our departure, and as she received several hints to use dispatch, in about an hour we were ready to depart.

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CHAPTER XXV.

No Situation, however wretched it seems, but has some sort of Comfort attending it.

We set forward from this peaceful neighbourhood, and walked on slowly. My eldest daughter being enfeebled by a slow fever, which had begun for some days to undermine her constitution, one of the officers, who had a horse, kindly took her behind him; for even these men cannot entirely divest themselves of humanity. My son led one of the little ones by the hand, and my wife the other, while I leaned upon my youngest girl, whose tears fell not for her own but my distresses.

We were now got from my late dwelling about two miles, when we saw a crowd running and shouting behind us, consisting of about fifty of my poorest parishioners. These, with dreadful imprecations, soon seized upon the two officers of justice, and swearing they would never see their minister go to gaol while they had a drop of blood to shed in his defence, were going to use them with great severity. The consequence might have been fatal had I not immediately interposed, and with some difficulty rescued the officers from the hands of the enraged multitude. My children, who looked upon my delivery now as certain, appeared transported with joy, and were in-

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capable of containing their raptures. But they were soon undeceived, upon hearing me address the poor deluded people, who came as they imagined to do me service.

« What! my friends,» cried I, « and is this the way you love me? Is this the manner you obey the instructions I have given you from the pulpit? Thus to fly in the face of justice, and bring down ruin on yourselves and me! Which is your ringleader? Show me the man that has thus seduced you. As sure as he lives he shall feel my resentment.—Alas! my dear deluded flock, return back to the duty you owe to God, to your country, and to me. I shall yet perhaps one day see you in greater felicity here, and contribute to make your lives more happy. But let it at least be my comfort when I pen my fold for immortality, that not one here shall be wanting.»

They now seemed all repentance, and melting into tears, came one after the other to bid me farewell. I shook each tenderly by the hand, and leaving them my blessing, proceeded forward without meeting any further interruption. Some hours before night we reached the town, or rather village, for it consisted but of a few mean houses, having lost all its former opulence, and retaining no marks of its ancient superiority but the gaol.

Upon entering we put up at the inn, where we had such refreshments as could most readily be procured, and I supped with my family with my usual cheerfulness. After seeing them properly accommodated for that night, I next attended the sheriff's officers to the prison, which had formerly been built for the purposes of war, and consisted of one large apartment, strongly grated and paved with stone, common to both felons and debtors at certain hours in the four-and-twenty. Besides this, every prisoner had a separate cell, where he was locked in for the night.

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I expected upon my entrance to find nothing but lamentations and various sounds of misery; but it was very different. The prisoners seemed all employed in one common design, that of forgetting thought in merriment or clamour. I was apprized of the usual perquisite required upon these occasions, and immediately complied with the demand, though the little money I had was very near being all exhausted. This was immediately sent away for liquor, and the whole prison soon was filled with riot, laughter, and profaneness.

« How,» cried I to myself, « shall men so very wicked be cheerful, and shall I be melancholy? I feel only the same confinement with them, and I think I have more reason to be happy.»

With such reflections I laboured to become cheerful; but cheerfulness was never yet produced by effort, which is itself painful. As I was sitting, therefore, in a corner of the gaol in a pensive posture, one of my fellow-prisoners came up, and sitting by me, entered into conversation. It was my constant rule in life never to avoid the conversation of any man who seemed to desire it: for, if good, I might profit by his instruction; if bad, he might be assisted by mine. I found this to be a knowing man, of strong unlettered sense, but a thorough knowledge of the world, as it is called, or more properly speaking, of human nature on the wrong side. He asked me if I had taken care to provide myself with a bed, which was a circumstance I had never once attended to.

« That's unfortunate,» cried he, « as you are allowed here nothing but straw, and your apartment is very large and cold. However, you seem to be something of a gentleman, and as I have been one myself in my time, part of my bed-clothes are heartily at your service.»

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I thanked him, professing my surprise at finding such humanity in a gaol in misfortunes; adding, to let him see that I was a scholar, « That the sage ancient seemed to understand the value of company in affliction, when he said, *Ton kosmon aire, ei dos ton etairon;* and in fact,» continued I, « what is the world if it affords only solitude?»

« You talk of the world, sir,» returned my fellow-prisoner; « *the world is in its dotage; and yet the cosmogony or creation of the world has puzzled the philosophers of every age. What a medley of opinions have they not broached upon the creation of the world! Sanchoniathon, Manetho, Berosus, and Ocellus Lucanus, have all attempted it in vain. The latter has these words, Anarchon ara kai atelutaion to pan, which imply—*» « I ask pardon, sir,» cried I, « for interrupting so much learning; but I think I have heard all this before. Have I not had the pleasure of once seeing you at Welbridge fair, and is not your name Ephraim Jenkinson?» At this demand he only sighed. « I suppose you must recollect,» resumed I, « one Doctor Primrose, from whom you bought a horse?»

He now at once recollected me; for the gloominess of the place and the approaching night had prevented his distinguishing my features before.—« Yes, sir,» returned Mr Jenkinson, « I remember you perfectly well; I bought a horse, but forgot to pay for him. Your neighbour Flamborough is the only prosecutor I am any way afraid of at the next assizes; for he intends to swear positively against me as a coiner. I am heartily sorry, sir, I ever deceived you, or indeed any man; for you see,» continued he, showing his shackles, « what my tricks have brought me to.»

« Well, sir,» replied I, « your kindness in offering me assistance when you could expect no return, shall be

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repaid with my endeavours to soften or totally suppress Mr Flamborough's evidence, and I will send my son to him for that purpose the first opportunity; nor do I in the least doubt but he will comply with my request; and as to my own evidence, you need be under no uneasiness about that.»

«Well, sir,» cried he, «all the return I can make shall be yours. You shall have more than half my bed-clothes to-night, and I'll take care to stand your friend in the prison, where I think I have some influence.»

I thanked him, and could not avoid being surprised at the present youthful change in his aspect; for at the time I had seen him before, he appeared at least sixty.—«Sir,» answered he, «you are little acquainted with the world; I had at that time false hair, and have learned the art of counterfeiting every age from seventeen to seventy. Ah! sir, had I but bestowed half the pains in learning a trade that I have in learning to be a scoundrel, I might have been a rich man at this day. But rogue as I am, still I may be your friend, and that perhaps when you least expect it.»

We were now prevented from further conversation by the arrival of the gaoler's servants, who came to call over the prisoners' names, and lock up for the night. A fellow also with a bundle of straw for my bed attended, who led me along a dark narrow passage into a room paved like the common prison, and in one corner of this I spread my bed, and the clothes given me by my fellow-prisoner; which done, my conductor, who was civil enough, bade me a good night. After my usual meditations, and having praised my Heavenly Corrector, I laid myself down, and slept with the utmost tranquillity till morning.

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CHAPTER XXVI.

A Reformation in the Gaol.—To make Laws complete, they should Reward as well as Punish.

THE next morning early I was awakened by my family, whom I found in tears at my bed-side. The gloomy strength of every thing about us, it seems, had daunted them. I gently rebuked their sorrow, assuring them I had never slept with greater tranquillity, and next inquired after my eldest daughter, who was not among them. They informed me that yesterday's uneasiness and fatigue had increased her fever, and it was judged proper to leave her behind. My next care was to send my son to procure a room or two to lodge the family in, as near the prison as conveniently could be found. He obeyed; but could only find one apartment, which was hired at a small expense for his mother and sisters, the gaoler with humanity consenting to let him and his two little brothers lie in the prison with me. A bed was therefore prepared for them in a corner of the room, which I thought answered very conveniently. I was willing, however, previously to know whether my little children chose to lie in a place which seemed to fright them upon entrance.

« Well, » cried I, « my good boys, how do you like your bed? I hope you are not afraid to lie in this room, dark as it appears? »

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« No, papa,» says Dick, « I am not afraid to lie any where where you are.»

« And I,» says Bill, who was yet but four years old, « love every place best that my papa is in.»

After this I allotted to each of the family what they were to do. My daughter was particularly directed to watch her declining sister's health; my wife was to attend me; my little boys were to read to me. « And as for you, my son,» continued I, « it is by the labour of your hands we must all hope to be supported. Your wages as a day-labourer will be fully sufficient, with proper frugality, to maintain us all, and comfortably too. Thou art now sixteen years old, and hast strength; and it was given thee, my son, for very useful purposes; for it must save from famine your helpless parents and family. Prepare then this evening to look out for work against to-morrow, and bring home every night what money you earn for our support.»

Having thus instructed him, and settled the rest, I walked down to the common prison, where I could enjoy more air and room. But I was not long there when the execrations, lewdness, and brutality that invaded me on every side, drove me back to my apartment again. Here I sat for some time pondering upon the strange infatuation of wretches, who, finding all mankind in open arms against them, were labouring to make themselves a future and a tremendous enemy.

Their insensibility excited my highest compassion, and blotted my own uneasiness from my mind. It even appeared a duty incumbent upon me to attempt to reclaim them. I resolved therefore once more to return, and, in spite of their contempt, to give them my advice, and conquer them by my perseverance. Going therefore among

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them again, I informed Mr Jenkinson of my design, at which he laughed heartily, but communicated it to the rest. The proposal was received with the greatest good-humour, as it promised to afford a new fund of entertainment to persons who had now no other resource for mirth, but what could be derived from ridicule or debauchery.

I therefore read them a portion of the service with a loud unaffected voice, and found my audience perfectly merry upon the occasion. Lewd whispers, groans of contrition burlesqued, winking, and coughing, alternately excited laughter. However, I continued with my natural solemnity to read on, sensible that what I did might mend some, but could itself receive no contamination from any.

After reading I entered upon my exhortation, which was rather calculated at first to amuse them than to reprove. I previously observed, that no other motive but their welfare could induce me to this; that I was their fellow-prisoner, and now got nothing by preaching. I was sorry, I said, to hear them so very profane; because they got nothing by it, but might lose a great deal: « For be assured, my friends, » cried I, « for you are my friends, however the world may disclaim your friendship, though you swore twelve thousand oaths in a day, it would not put one penny in your purse. Then what signifies calling every moment upon the devil, and courting his friendship, since you find how scurvily he uses you? He has given you nothing here, you find, but a mouthful of oaths and an empty belly; and by the best accounts I have of him, he will give you nothing that's good hereafter.

« If used ill in our dealings with one man, we naturally go elsewhere. Were it not worth your while, then, just to try how you may like the usage of another master, who gives you fair promises at least to come to him? Surely,

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my friends, of all stupidity in the world, his must be the greatest, who, after robbing a house, runs to the thief-takers for protection. And yet how are you more wise? You are all seeking comfort from one that has already betrayed you, applying to a more malicious being than any thief-taker of them all; for they only decoy and then hang you; but he decoys and hangs, and, what is worst of all, will not let you loose after the hangman has done.»

When I had concluded, I received the compliments of my audience, some of whom came and shook me by the hand, swearing that I was a very honest fellow, and that they desired my further acquaintance. I therefore promised to repeat my lecture next day, and actually conceived some hopes of making a reformation here; for it had ever been my opinion, that no man was past the hour of amendment, every heart lying open to the shafts of reproof, if the archer could but take a proper aim. When I had thus satisfied my mind, I went back to my apartment, where my wife prepared a frugal meal, while Mr Jenkinson begged leave to add his dinner to ours, and partake of the pleasure, as he was kind enough to express it, of my conversation. He had not yet seen my family; for as they came to my apartment by a door in the narrow passage already described, by this means they avoided the common prison. Jenkinson at the first interview, therefore, seemed not a little struck with the beauty of my youngest daughter, which her pensive air contributed to heighten; and my little ones did not pass unnoticed.

«Alas, doctor,» cried he, «these children are too handsome and too good for such a place as this!»

«Why, Mr Jenkinson,» replied I, «thank Heaven, my children are pretty tolerable in morals; and if they be good, it matters little for the rest.»

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« I fancy, sir,» returned my fellow-prisoner, « that it must give you great comfort to have all this little family about you.»

« A comfort, Mr Jenkinson!» replied I; « yes, it is indeed a comfort, and I would not be without them for all the world; for they can make a dungeon seem a palace. There is but one way in this life of wounding my happiness, and that is by injuring them.»

« I am afraid then, sir,» cried he, « that I am in some measure culpable; for I think I see here (looking at my son Moses), one that I have injured, and by whom I wish to be forgiven.»

My son immediately recollected his voice and features, though he had before seen him in disguise, and taking him by the hand, with a smile forgave him. « Yet,» continued he, « I can't help wondering at what you could see in my face, to think me a proper mark for deception.»

« My dear sir,» returned the other, « it was not your face, but your white stockings, and the black riband in your hair, that allured me. But no disparagement to your parts, I have deceived wiser men than you in my time; and yet, with all my tricks, the blockheads have been too many for me at last.»

« I suppose,» cried my son, « that the narrative of such a life as yours must be extremely instructive and amusing.»

« Not much of either,» returned Mr Jenkinson. « Those relations which describe the tricks and vices only of mankind, by increasing our suspicion in life, retard our success. The traveller that distrusts every person he meets, and turns back upon the appearance of every man that looks like a robber, seldom arrives in time at his journey's end.»

« Indeed I think, from my own experience, that the knowing one is the silliest fellow under the sun. I was

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thought cunning from my very childhood: when but seven years old, the ladies would say that I was a perfect little man; at fourteen I knew the world, cocked my hat, and loved the ladies; at twenty, though I was perfectly honest, yet every one thought me so cunning, that not one would trust me. Thus I was at last obliged to turn sharper in my own defence, and have lived ever since, my head throbbing with schemes to deceive, and my heart palpitating with fears of detection. I used often to laugh at your honest simple neighbour Flamborough, and one way or another generally cheated him once a-year. Yet still the honest man went forward without suspicion, and grew rich, while I still continued tricksy and cunning, and was poor, without the consolation of being honest. However,» continued he, «let me know your case, and what has brought you here; perhaps, though I have not skill to avoid a gaol myself, I may extricate my friends.»

In compliance with his curiosity, I informed him of the whole train of accidents and follies that had plunged me into my present troubles, and my utter inability to get free.

After hearing my story, and pausing some minutes, he slapped his forehead, as if he had hit upon something material, and took his leave, saying he would try what could be done.

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CHAPTER XXVII.

The same subject continued.

The next morning, I communicated to my wife and children the scheme I had planned of reforming the prisoners, which they received with universal disapprobation, alleging the impossibility and impropriety of it; adding, that my endeavours would no way contribute to their amendment, but might probably disgrace my calling.

« Excuse me,» returned I; « these people, however fallen, are still men; and that is a very good title to my affections. Good counsel rejected, returns to enrich the giver's bosom; and though the instruction I communicate may not mend them, yet it will assuredly mend myself. If these wretches, my children, were princes, there would be thousands ready to offer their ministry; but, in my opinion, the heart that is buried in a dungeon is as precious as that seated upon a throne. Yes, my treasures, if I can mend them, I will: perhaps they will not all despise me. Perhaps I may catch up even one from the gulf, and that will be great gain; for is there upon earth a gem so precious as the human soul?»

Thus saying, I left them, and descended to the common prison, where I found the prisoners very merry, expecting my arrival; and each prepared with some gaol trick to

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play upon the doctor. Thus, as I was going to begin, one turned my wig awry, as if by accident, and then asked my pardon. A second, who stood at some distance, had a knack of spitting through his teeth, which fell in showers upon my book. A third would cry *amen* in such an affected tone, as gave the rest great delight. A fourth had slily picked my pocket of my spectacles. But there was one whose trick gave more universal pleasure than all the rest; for observing the manner in which I had disposed my books on the table before me, he very dexterously displaced one of them, and put an obscene jest-book of his own in the place. However, I took no notice of all that this mischievous group of little beings could do, but went on, perfectly sensible that what was ridiculous in my attempt would excite mirth only the first or second time, while what was serious would be permanent. My design succeeded, and in less than six days some were penitent, and all attentive.

It was now that I applauded my perseverance and address, at thus giving sensibility to wretches divested of every moral feeling; and now began to think of doing them temporal services also, by rendering their situation somewhat more comfortable. Their time had hitherto been divided between famine and excess, tumultuous riot and bitter repining. Their only employment was quarrelling among each other, playing at cribbage, and cutting tobacco-stoppers. From this last mode of idle industry I took the hint of setting such as chose to work at cutting pegs for tobacconists and shoe-makers, the proper wood being bought by a general subscription, and when manufactured, sold by my appointment; so that each earned something every day—a trifle indeed, but sufficient to maintain him.

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I did not stop here, but instituted fines for the punishment of immorality, and rewards for peculiar industry. Thus, in less than a fortnight I had formed them into something social and humane, and had the pleasure of regarding myself as a legislator, who had brought men from their native ferocity into friendship and obedience.

And it were highly to be wished, that legislative power would thus direct the law rather to reformation than severity: that it would seem convinced, that the work of eradicating crimes is not by making punishments familiar, but formidable. Then, instead of our present prisons, which find or make men guilty, which enclose wretches for the commission of one crime, and return them, if returned alive, fitted for the perpetration of thousands; we should see, as in other parts of Europe, places of penitence and solitude, where the accused might be attended by such as could give them repentance if guilty, or new motives to virtue if innocent. And this, but not the increasing punishments, is the way to mend a state. Nor can I avoid even questioning the validity of that right which social combinations have assumed, of capitally punishing offences of a slight nature. In cases of murder their right is obvious, as it is the duty of us all, from the law of self-defence, to cut off that man who has shown a disregard for the life of another. Against such, all nature rises in arms; but it is not so against him who steals my property. Natural law gives me no right to take away his life, as, by that, the horse he steals is as much his property as mine. If then I have any right, it must be from a compact made between us, that he who deprives the other of his horse shall die. But this is a false compact; because no man has a right to barter his life any more than to take it away, as it is not his own. And beside, the compact is inadequate,

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and would be set aside even in a court of modern equity, as there is a great penalty for a very trifling convenience, since it is far better that two men should live than that one man should ride. But a compact that is false between two men, is equally so between a hundred or a hundred thousand; for as ten millions of circles can never make a square, so the united voice of myriads cannot lend the smallest foundation to falsehood. It is thus that reason speaks, and untutored nature says the same thing. Savages, that are directed by natural law alone, are very tender of the lives of each other; they seldom shed blood but to retaliate former cruelty.

Our Saxon ancestors, fierce as they were in war, had but few executions in times of peace; and in all commencing governments that have the print of nature still strong upon them, scarcely any crime is held capital.

It is among the citizens of a refined community that penal laws, which are in the hands of the rich, are laid upon the poor. Government, while it grows older, seems to acquire the moroseness of age; and as if our property were become dearer in proportion as it increased; as if the more enormous our wealth the more extensive our fears, all our possessions are paled up with new edicts every day, and hung round with gibbets to scare every invader.

I cannot tell whether it is from the number of our penal laws, or the licentiousness of our people, that this country should show more convicts in a year than half the dominions of Europe united. Perhaps it is owing to both; for they mutually produce each other. When, by indiscriminate penal laws, a nation beholds the same punishment affixed to dissimilar degrees of guilt, from perceiving no distinction in the penalty, the people are led to lose all

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sense of distinction in the crime, and this distinction is the bulwark of all morality: thus the multitude of laws produce new vices, and new vices call for fresh restraints.

It were to be wished then, that power, instead of contriving new laws to punish vice; instead of drawing hard the cords of society till a convulsion come to burst them; instead of cutting away wretches as useless before we have tried their utility; instead of converting correction into vengeance,—it were to be wished that we tried the restrictive arts of government, and made law the protector, but not the tyrant of the people. We should then find that creatures, whose souls are held as dross, only wanted the hand of a refiner: we should then find that creatures, now stuck up for long tortures, lest luxury should feel a momentary pang, might, if properly treated, serve to sinew the state in times of danger; that as their faces are like ours, their hearts are so too; that few minds are so base as that perseverance cannot amend; that a man may see his last crime without dying for it; and that very little blood will serve to cement our security.

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CHAPTER XXVIII.

Happiness and Misery rather the result of prudence than of virtue in this life; temporal evils or felicities being regarded by Heaven as things merely in themselves trifling, and unworthy its care in the distribution.

I HAD now been confined more than a fortnight, but had not since my arrival been visited by my dear Olivia, and I greatly longed to see her. Having communicated my wishes to my wife, the next morning the poor girl entered my apartment leaning on her sister's arm. The change which I saw in her countenance struck me. The numberless graces that once resided there were now fled, and the hand of death seemed to have moulded every feature to alarm me. Her temples were sunk, her forehead was tense, and a fatal paleness sat upon her cheek.

« I am glad to see thee, my dear,» cried I; « but why this dejection, Livy? I hope, my love, you have too great a regard for me to permit disappointment thus to undermine a life which I prize as my own. Be cheerful, child, and we may yet see happier days.»

« You have ever, sir,» replied she, « been kind to me, and it adds to my pain that I shall never have an opportunity of sharing that happiness you promise. Happiness, I fear, is no longer reserved for me here; and I long to be rid of a place where I have only found distress. Indeed, sir, I wish you would make a proper submission to Mr

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Thornhill; it may in some measure induce him to pity you, and it will give me relief in dying.»

«Never, child,» replied I; «never will I be brought to acknowledge my daughter a prostitute; for though the world may look upon your offence with scorn, let it be mine to regard it as a mark of credulity, not of guilt.—My dear, I am no way miserable in this place, however dismal it may seem; and be assured, that while you continue to bless me by living, he shall never have my consent to make you more wretched by marrying another.»

After the departure of my daughter, my fellow-prisoner, who was by at this interview, sensibly enough expostulated upon my obstinacy in refusing a submission which promised to give me freedom. He observed, that the rest of my family was not to be sacrificed to the peace of one child alone, and she the only one who had offended me. «Beside,» added he, «I don't know if it be just thus to obstruct the union of man and wife, which you do at present, by refusing to consent to a match you cannot hinder, but may render unhappy.»

«Sir,» replied I, «you are unacquainted with the man that oppresses us. I am very sensible that no submission I can make could procure me liberty even for an hour. I am told that even in this very room a debtor of his, no later than last year, died for want. But though my submission and approbation could transfer me from hence to the most beautiful apartment he is possessed of; yet I would grant neither, as something whispers me that it would be giving a sanction to adultery. While my daughter lives, no other marriage of his shall ever be legal in my eye. Were she removed, indeed, I should be the basest of men, from any resentment of my own, to attempt putting asunder those who wish for a union. No, villain as he is, I should

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then wish him married, to prevent the consequences of his future debaucheries. But now, should I not be the most cruel of all fathers to sign an instrument which must send my child to the grave, merely to avoid a prison myself; and thus, to escape one pang, break my child's heart with a thousand?»

He acquiesced in the justice of this answer, but could not avoid observing, that he feared my daughter's life was already too much wasted to keep me long a prisoner. « However,» continued he, « though you refuse to submit to the nephew, I hope you have no objections to laying your case before the uncle, who has the first character in the kingdom for every thing that is just and good. I would advise you to send him a letter by the post, intimating all his nephew's ill usage, and my life for it, that in three days you shall have an answer.» I thanked him for the hint, and instantly set about complying; but I wanted paper, and unluckily all our money had been laid out that morning in provisions: however, he supplied me.

For the three ensuing days I was in a state of anxiety to know what reception my letter might meet with; but in the mean time was frequently solicited by my wife to submit to any conditions rather than remain here, and every hour received repeated accounts of the decline of my daughter's health. The third day and the fourth arrived, but I received no answer to my letter: the complaints of a stranger against a favourite nephew were no way likely to succeed; so that these hopes soon vanished like all my former. My mind, however, still supported itself, though confinement and bad air began to make a visible alteration in my health, and my arm that had suffered in the fire grew worse. My children, however, sat by me, and while I was stretched on my straw, read to me by turns, or listened and wept at

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my instructions. But my daughter's health declined faster than mine; every message from her contributed to increase my apprehensions and pain. The fifth morning after I had written the letter which was sent to Sir William Thornhill, I was alarmed with an account that she was speechless. Now it was that confinement was truly painful to me; my soul was bursting from its prison to be near the pillow of my child, to comfort, to strengthen her, to receive her last wishes, and teach her soul the way to heaven! Another account came: she was expiring, and yet I was debarred the small comfort of weeping by her. My fellow-prisoner some time after came with the last account. He bade me be patient: she was dead!——The next morning he returned, and found me with my two little ones, now my only companions, who were using all their innocent efforts to comfort me. They entreated to read to me, and bade me not to cry, for I was now too old to weep. «And is not my sister an angel now, papa?» cried the eldest; «and why then are you sorry for her? I wish I were an angel out of this frightful place, if my papa were with me.» «Yes,» added my youngest darling, «Heaven, where my sister is, is a finer place than this, and there are none but good people there, and the people here are very bad.»

Mr Jenkinson interrupted their harmless prattle by observing, that, now my daughter was no more, I should seriously think of the rest of my family, and attempt to save my own life, which was every day declining for want of necessaries and wholesome air. He added, that it was now incumbent on me to sacrifice any pride or resentment of my own to the welfare of those who depended on me for support; and that I was now, both by reason and justice, obliged to try to reconcile my landlord.

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« Heaven be praised,» replied I, « there is no pride left me now : I should detest my own heart if I saw either pride or resentment lurking there. On the contrary, as my oppressor has been once my parishioner, I hope one day to present him up an unpolluted soul at the eternal tribunal. No, sir, I have no resentment now, and though he has taken from me what I held dearer than all his treasures, though he has wrung my heart,—for I am sick almost to fainting, very sick, my fellow-prisoner,—yet that shall never inspire me with vengeance. I am now willing to approve his marriage; and if this submission can do him any pleasure, let him know, that if I have done him any injury I am sorry for it.»

Mr Jenkinson took pen and ink, and wrote down my submission nearly as I have expressed it, to which I signed my name. My son was employed to carry the letter to Mr Thornhill, who was then at his seat in the country. He went, and in about six hours returned with a verbal answer. He had some difficulty, he said, to get a sight of his landlord, as the servants were insolent and suspicious; but he accidentally saw him as he was going out upon business, preparing for his marriage, which was to be in three days. He continued to inform us, that he stepped up in the humblest manner and delivered the letter, which, when Mr Thornhill had read, he said that all submission was now too late and unnecessary; that he had heard of our application to his uncle, which met with the contempt it deserved; and as for the rest, that all future applications should be directed to his attorney, not to him. He observed, however, that as he had a very good opinion of the discretion of the two young ladies, they might have been the most agreeable intercessors.

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« Well, sir,» said I to my fellow-prisoner, « you now discover the temper of the man that oppresses me. He can at once be facetious and cruel; but let him use me as he will, I shall soon be free, in spite of all his bolts to restrain me. I am now drawing towards an abode that looks brighter as I approach it: this expectation cheers my afflictions, and though I leave a helpless family of orphans behind me, yet they will not be utterly forsaken; some friend perhaps will be found to assist them for the sake of their poor father, and some may charitably relieve them for the sake of their Heavenly Father.»

Just as I spoke, my wife, whom I had not seen that day before, appeared with looks of terror, and making efforts, but unable to speak. « Why, my love,» cried I, « why will you thus increase my afflictions by your own? What though no submissions can turn our severe master, though he has doomed me to die in this place of wretchedness, and though we have lost a darling child, yet still you will find comfort in your other children when I shall be no more.» « We have indeed lost,» returned she, « a darling child. My Sophia, my dearest, is gone; snatched from us, carried off by ruffians!»—« How, madam,» cried my fellow-prisoner, « Miss Sophia carried off by villains! sure it cannot be.»

She could only answer with a fixed look and a flood of tears. But one of the prisoners' wives who was present, and came in with her, gave us a more distinct account: she informed us, that as my wife, my daughter, and herself were taking a walk together on the great road, a little way out of the village, a post-chaise and pair drove up to them, and instantly stopped. Upon which a well-dressed man, but not Mr Thornhill, stepping out, clasped my

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daughter round the waist, and forcing her in, bid the postillion drive on, so that they were out of sight in a moment.

« Now,» cried I, « the sum of my miseries is made up, nor is it in the power of any thing on earth to give me another pang. What! not one left! not to leave me one!—The monster!—The child that was next my heart! she had the beauty of an angel, and almost the wisdom of an angel. But support that woman, nor let her fall.—Not to leave me one!»

« Alas! my husband,» said my wife, « you seem to want comfort even more than I. Our distresses are great; but I could bear this and more, if I saw you but easy. They may take away my children, and all the world, if they leave me but you.»

My son, who was present, endeavoured to moderate her grief; he bade us take comfort, for he hoped that we might still have reason to be thankful.—« My child,» cried I, « look round the world, and see if there be any happiness left me now. Is not every ray of comfort shut out, while all our bright prospects only lie beyond the grave?»—« My dear father,» returned he, « I hope there is still something that will give you an interval of satisfaction; for I have a letter from my brother George.»—« What of him, child?» interrupted I, « does he know our misery? I hope my boy is exempt from any part of what his wretched family suffers?»—« Yes, sir,» returned he, « he is perfectly gay, cheerful, and happy. His letter brings nothing but good news; he is the favourite of his colonel, who promises to procure him the very next lieutenancy that becomes vacant.»

« And are you sure of all this?» cried my wife: « Are you sure that nothing ill has befallen my boy?»—« No-

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thing indeed, madam,» returned my son; «you shall see the letter, which will give you the highest pleasure; and if any thing can procure you comfort, I am sure that will.» —«But are you sure,» still repeated she, «that the letter is from himself, and that he is really so happy?»—«Yes, madam,» replied he, «it is certainly his, and he will one day be the credit and the support of our family.»—«Then I thank Providence,» cried she, «that my last letter to him has miscarried.—Yes, my dear,» continued she, turning to me, «I will now confess, that though the hand of Heaven is sore upon us in other instances, it has been favourable here. By the last letter I wrote my son, which was in the bitterness of anger, I desired him, upon his mother's blessing, and if he had the heart of a man, to see justice done his father and sister, and avenge our cause. But thanks be to Him that directs all things, it has miscarried, and I am at rest.»—«Woman,» cried I, «thou hast done very ill, and at another time my reproaches might have been more severe. Oh! what a tremendous gulf hast thou escaped, that would have buried both thee and him in endless ruin. Providence indeed has here been kinder to us than we to ourselves. It has reserved that son to be the father and protector of my children when I shall be away. How unjustly did I complain of being stripped of every comfort, when still I hear that he is happy, and insensible of our afflictions; still kept in reserve to support his widowed mother, and to protect his brothers and sisters. But what sisters has he left? he has no sisters now; they are all gone, robbed from me, and I am undone.»—«Father,» interrupted my son, «I beg you will give me leave to read this letter, I know it will please you.» Upon which, with my permission, he read as follows:—

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'HONOURED SIR,

'I HAVE called off my imagination a few moments from the pleasures that surround me, to fix it upon objects that are still more pleasing, the dear little fire-side at home. My fancy draws that harmless group as listening to every line of this with great composure. I view those faces with delight which never felt the deforming hand of ambition or distress! But whatever your happiness may be at home, I am sure it will be some addition to it to hear, that I am perfectly pleased with my situation, and every way happy here.

'Our regiment is countermanded, and is not to leave the kingdom: the colonel, who professes himself my friend, takes me with him to all companies where he is acquainted, and after my first visit I generally find myself received with increased respect upon repeating it. I danced last night with Lady G——, and could I forget you know whom, I might be perhaps successful. But it is my fate still to remember others, while I am myself forgotten by most of my absent friends; and in this number I fear, sir, that I must consider you; for I have long expected the pleasure of a letter from home, to no purpose. Olivia and Sophia too promised to write, but seem to have forgotten me. Tell them they are two arrant little baggages, and that I am this moment in a most violent passion with them: yet still, I know not how, though I want to bluster a little, my heart is respondent only to softer emotions. Then tell them, sir, that after all I love them affectionately, and be assured of my ever remaining

'Your dutiful son.'

« In all our miseries,» cried I, « what thanks have we

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not to return, that one at least of our family is exempted from what we suffer. Heaven be his guard, and keep my boy thus happy, to be the supporter of his widowed mother, and the father of these two babes, which is all the patrimony I can now bequeath him. May he keep their innocence from the temptations of want, and be their conductor in the paths of honour!» I had scarcely said these words, when a noise like that of a tumult seemed to proceed from the prison below; it died away soon after, and a clanking of fetters was heard along the passage that led to my apartment. The keeper of the prison entered, holding a man all bloody, wounded, and fettered with the heaviest irons. I looked with compassion on the wretch as he approached me, but with horror when I found it was my own son.—« My George! my George! and do I behold thee thus? Wounded—fettered! Is this thy happiness? is this the manner you return to me? O that this sight could break my heart at once, and let me die!»

« Where, sir, is your fortitude?» returned my son with an intrepid voice. « I must suffer; my life is forfeited, and let them take it.»

I tried to restrain my passions for a few minutes in silence, but I thought I should have died with the effort. —« O my boy, my heart weeps to behold thee thus; and I cannot, cannot help it. In the moment that I thought thee blessed, and prayed for thy safety, to behold thee thus again! Chained, wounded! And yet the death of the youthful is happy. But I am old, a very old man, and have lived to see this day! To see my children all untimely falling about me, while I continue a wretched survivor in the midst of ruin! May all the curses that ever sunk a soul fall heavy upon the murderer of my children! May he live, like me, to see——»

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« Hold, sir,» replied my son, « or I shall blush for thee. How, sir, forgetful of your age, your holy calling, thus to arrogate the justice of Heaven, and fling those curses upward that must soon descend to crush thy own gray head with destruction! No, sir, let it be your care now to fit me for that vile death I must shortly suffer; to arm me with hope and resolution; to give me courage to drink of that bitterness which must shortly be my portion.»

« My child, you must not die: I am sure no offence of thine can deserve so vile a punishment. My George could never be guilty of any crime to make his ancestors ashamed of him.»

« Mine, sir,» returned my son, « is, I fear, an unpardonable one. When I received my mother's letter from home, I immediately came down, determined to punish the betrayer of our honour, and sent him an order to meet me, which he answered, not in person, but by dispatching four of his domestics to seize me. I wounded one who first assaulted me, and I fear desperately; but the rest made me their prisoner. The coward is determined to put the law in execution against me; the proofs are undeniable: I have sent a challenge, and as I am the first transgressor upon the statute, I see no hopes of pardon. But you have often charmed me with your lessons of fortitude; let me now, sir, find them in your example.»

« And, my son, you shall find them. I am now raised above this world, and all the pleasures it can produce. From this moment I break from my heart all the ties that held it down to earth, and will prepare to fit us both for eternity. Yes, my son, I will point out the way, and my soul shall guide yours in the ascent, for we will take our flight together. I now see and am convinced you can expect no pardon here; and I can only exhort you to

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seek it at that greatest tribunal where we both shall shortly answer. But let us not be niggardly in our exhortation, but let all our fellow-prisoners have a share:—Good gaoler, let them be permitted to stand here while I attempt to improve them.» Thus saying, I made an effort to rise from my straw, but wanted strength, and was able only to recline against the wall. The prisoners assembled themselves according to my directions, for they loved to hear my counsel: my son and his mother supported me on either side; I looked and saw that none were wanting, and then addressed them with the following exhortation.

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CHAPTER XXIX.

The equal dealings of Providence demonstrated with regard to the happy and the miserable here below.—That from the nature of pleasure and pain, the wretched must be repaid the balance of their sufferings in the life hereafter.

My friends, my children, and fellow-sufferers, when I reflect on the distribution of good and evil here below, I find that much has been given man to enjoy, yet still more to suffer. Though we should examine the whole world, we shall not find one man so happy as to have nothing left to wish for; but we daily see thousands, who, by suicide, show us they have nothing left to hope. In this life, then, it appears that we cannot be entirely blessed, but yet we may be completely miserable.

Why man should thus feel pain; why our wretchedness should be requisite in the formation of universal felicity; why, when all other systems are made perfect by the perfection of their subordinate parts, the great system should require for its perfection parts that are not only subordinate to others, but imperfect in themselves;—these are questions that never can be explained, and might be useless if known. On this subject, Providence has thought fit to elude our curiosity, satisfied with granting us motives to consolation.

In this situation man has called in the friendly assistance

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of philosophy, and Heaven, seeing the incapacity of that to console him, has given him the aid of religion. The consolations of philosophy are very amusing, but often fallacious. It tells us that life is filled with comforts, if we will but enjoy them; and on the other hand, that though we unavoidably have miseries here, life is short, and they will soon be over. Thus do these consolations destroy each other; for, if life is a place of comfort, its shortness must be misery, and if it be long, our griefs are protracted. Thus philosophy is weak; but religion comforts in a higher strain. Man is here, it tells us, fitting up his mind, and preparing it for another abode. When the good man leaves the body and is all a glorious mind, he will find he has been making himself a heaven of happiness here; while the wretch that has been maimed and contaminated by his vices, shrinks from his body with terror, and finds that he has anticipated the vengeance of Heaven. To religion then we must hold in every circumstance of life for our truest comfort; for if already we are happy, it is a pleasure to think that we can make that happiness unending; and if we are miserable, it is very consoling to think that there is a place of rest. Thus, to the fortunate, religion holds out a continuance of bliss; to the wretched, a change from pain.

But though religion is very kind to all men, it has promised peculiar rewards to the unhappy: the sick, the naked, the houseless, the heavy-laden, and the prisoner, have ever most frequent promises in our sacred law. The author of our religion every where professes himself the wretch's friend, and, unlike the false ones of this world, bestows all his caresses upon the forlorn. The unthinking have censured this as partiality, as a preference without merit to deserve it. But they never reflect, that it is not in

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the power even of Heaven itself to make the offer of unceasing felicity as great a gift to the happy as to the miserable. To the first, eternity is but a single blessing, since at most it but increases what they already possess. To the latter, it is a double advantage; for it diminishes their pain here, and rewards them with heavenly bliss hereafter.

But Providence is in another respect kinder to the poor than the rich; for as it thus makes the life after death more desirable, so it smooths the passage there. The wretched have had a long familiarity with every face of terror. The man of sorrows lays himself quietly down, without possessions to regret, and but few ties to stop his departure: he feels only nature's pang in the final separation, and this is no way greater than he has often fainted under before; for after a certain degree of pain, every new breach that death opens in the constitution, nature kindly covers with insensibility.

Thus Providence has given the wretched two advantages over the happy in this life—greater felicity in dying, and in heaven all that superiority of pleasure which arises from contrasted enjoyment. And this superiority, my friends, is no small advantage, and seems to be one of the pleasures of the poor man in the parable; for though he was already in heaven, and felt all the raptures it could give, yet it was mentioned as an addition to his happiness, that he had once been wretched, and now was comforted; that he had known what it was to be miserable, and now felt what it was to be happy.

Thus, my friends, you see religion does what philosophy could never do: it shows the equal dealings of Heaven to the happy and the unhappy, and levels all human enjoyments to nearly the same standard. It gives to both rich and poor the same happiness hereafter, and equal hopes to

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aspire after it; but if the rich have the advantage of enjoying pleasure here, the poor have the endless satisfaction of knowing what it was once to be miserable, when crowned with endless felicity hereafter; and even though this should be called a small advantage, yet being an eternal one, it must make up by duration what the temporal happiness of the great may have exceeded by intenseness.

These are, therefore, the consolations which the wretched have peculiar to themselves, and in which they are above the rest of mankind; in other respects, they are below them. They who would know the miseries of the poor, must see life and endure it. To declaim on the temporal advantages they enjoy, is only repeating what none either believe or practise. The men who have the necessaries of living are not poor, and they who want them must be miserable. Yes, my friends, we must be miserable. No vain efforts of a refined imagination can soothe the wants of nature, can give elastic sweetness to the dark vapour of a dungeon, or ease to the throbbings of a broken heart. Let the philosopher from his couch of softness tell us that we can resist all these: alas! the effort by which we resist them is still the greatest pain. Death is slight, and any man may sustain it; but torments are dreadful, and these no man can endure.

To us then, my friends, the promises of happiness in heaven should be peculiarly dear; for if our reward be in this life alone, we are then indeed of all men the most miserable. When I look round these gloomy walls, made to terrify as well as to confine us; this light, that only serves to show the horrors of the place; those shackles, that tyranny has imposed or crime made necessary; when I survey these emaciated looks, and hear those groans, O! my friends, what a glorious exchange would heaven be for

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these. To fly through regions unconfined as air, to bask in the sunshine of eternal bliss, to carol over endless hymns of praise, to have no master to threaten or insult us, but the form of Goodness himself for ever in our eyes! when I think of these things, death becomes the messenger of very glad tidings; when I think of these things, his sharpest arrow becomes the staff of my support; when I think of these things, what is there in life worth having? when I think of these things, what is there that should not be spurned away? Kings in their palaces should groan for such advantages; but we, humbled as we are, should yearn for them.

And shall these things be ours? Ours they will certainly be if we but try for them; and what is a comfort, we are shut out from many temptations that would retard our pursuit. Only let us try for them, and they will certainly be ours; and what is still a comfort, shortly too: for if we look back on a past life, it appears but a very short span, and whatever we may think of the rest of life, it will yet be found of less duration; as we grow older, the days seem to grow shorter, and our intimacy with time ever lessens the perception of his stay. Then let us take comfort now, for we shall soon be at our journey's end; we shall soon lay down the heavy burden laid by Heaven upon us; and though death, the only friend of the wretched, for a little while mocks the weary traveller with the view, and like his horizon still flies before him; yet the time will certainly and shortly come, when we shall cease from our toil; when the luxurious great ones of the world shall no more tread us to the earth; when we shall think with pleasure of our sufferings below; when we shall be surrounded with all our friends, or such as deserved our friendship; when our bliss shall be unutterable, and still, to crown all, unending.

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CHAPTER XXX.

Happier Prospects begin to appear.—Let us be inflexible, and Fortune will at last change in our favour.

When I had thus finished, and my audience was retired, the gaoler, who was one of the most humane of his profession, hoped I would not be displeased, as what he did was but his duty, observing, that he must be obliged to remove my son into a stronger cell, but that he should be permitted to revisit me every morning. I thanked him for his clemency, and grasping my boy's hand, bade him farewell, and be mindful of the great duty that was before him.

I again therefore laid me down, and one of my little ones sat by my bed-side reading, when Mr Jenkinson entering, informed me that there was news of my daughter; for that she was seen by a person about two hours before in a strange gentleman's company, and that they had stopped at a neighbouring village for refreshment, and seemed as if returning to town. He had scarcely delivered this news when the gaoler came with looks of haste and pleasure to inform me, that my daughter was found. Moses came running in a moment after, crying out that his sister Sophy was below, and coming up with our old friend Mr Burchell.

Just as he delivered this news, my dearest girl entered, and with looks almost wild with pleasure, ran to kiss me in a transport of affection. Her mother's tears and silence

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also showed her pleasure——« Here, papa,» cried the charming girl, « here is the brave man to whom I owe my delivery; to this gentleman's intrepidity I am indebted for my happiness and safety——» A kiss from Mr Burchell, whose pleasure seemed even greater than hers, interrupted what she was going to add.

« Ah, Mr Burchell,» cried I, « this is but a wretched habitation you now find us in; and we are now very different from what you last saw us. You were ever our friend: we have long discovered our errors with regard to you, and repented of our ingratitude. After the vile usage you then received at my hands, I am almost ashamed to behold your face; yet I hope you'll forgive me, as I was deceived by a base ungenerous wretch, who under the mask of friendship has undone me.»

« It is impossible,» replied Mr Burchell, « that I should forgive you, as you never deserved my resentment. I partly saw your delusion then, and as it was out of my power to restrain, I could only pity it.»

« It was ever my conjecture,» cried I, « that your mind was noble, but now I find it so. But tell me, my dear child, how thou hast been relieved, or who the ruffians were who carried thee away.»

« Indeed, sir,» replied she, « as to the villain who carried me off, I am yet ignorant. For, as my mamma and I were walking out, he came behind us, and almost before I could call for help, forced me into the post-chaise, and in an instant the horses drove away. I met several on the road to whom I cried out for assistance, but they disregarded my entreaties. In the mean time the ruffian himself used every art to hinder me from crying out: he flattered and threatened by turns, and swore that if I continued but silent he intended no harm. In the mean time I had broken the

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canvass that he had drawn up, and whom should I perceive at some distance but your old friend Mr Burchell, walking along with his usual swiftness, with the great stick for which we used so much to ridicule him. As soon as we came within hearing, I called out to him by name, and entreated his help. I repeated my exclamations several times, upon which with a very loud voice he bid the postillion stop; but the boy took no notice, but drove on with still greater speed. I now thought he could never overtake us, when, in less than a minute, I saw Mr Burchell come running up by the side of the horses, and with one blow knock the postillion to the ground. The horses, when he was fallen, soon stopped of themselves, and the ruffian stepping out, with oaths and menaces drew his sword, and ordered him at his peril to retire; but Mr Burchell running up, shivered his sword to pieces, and then pursued him for near a quarter of a mile; but he made his escape. I was at this time come out myself, willing to assist my deliverer; but he soon returned to me in triumph. The postillion, who was recovered, was going to make his escape too; but Mr Burchell ordered him at his peril to mount again and drive back to town. Finding it impossible to resist, he reluctantly complied, though the wound he had received seemed to me at least to be dangerous. He continued to complain of the pain as we drove along, so that he at last excited Mr Burchell's compassion, who at my request exchanged him for another, at an inn where we called on our return.»

«Welcome, then,» cried I, «my child! and thou, her gallant deliverer, a thousand welcomes! Though our cheer is but wretched, yet our hearts are ready to receive you. And now, Mr Burchell, as you have delivered my girl, if you think her a recompense, she is yours; if you

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can stoop to an alliance with a family so poor as mine, take her; obtain her consent, as I know you have her heart, and you have mine. And let me tell you, sir, that I give you no small treasure: she has been celebrated for beauty, it is true, but that is not my meaning, I give you up a treasure in her mind.»

«But I suppose, sir,» cried Mr Burchell, «that you are apprized of my circumstances, and of my incapacity to support her as she deserves?»

«If your present objection,» replied I, «be meant as an evasion of my offer, I desist: but I know no man so worthy to deserve her as you; and if I could give her thousands, and thousands sought her from me, yet my honest brave Burchell should be my dearest choice.»

To all this his silence alone seemed to give a mortifying refusal, and without the least reply to my offer, he demanded if we could not be furnished with refreshments from the next inn; to which being answered in the affirmative, he ordered them to send in the best dinner that could be provided upon such short notice. He bespoke also a dozen of their best wine, and some cordials for me; adding, with a smile, that he would stretch a little for once, and, though in a prison, asserted he was never better disposed to be merry. The waiter soon made his appearance with preparations for dinner; a table was lent us by the gaoler, who seemed remarkably assiduous; the wine was disposed in order, and two very well-dressed dishes were brought in.

My daughter had not yet heard of her poor brother's melancholy situation, and we all seemed unwilling to damp her cheerfulness by the relation. But it was in vain that I attempted to appear cheerful, the circumstances of my unfortunate son broke through all efforts to dissemble;

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so that I was at last obliged to damp our mirth by relating his misfortunes, and wishing that he might be permitted to share with us in this little interval of satisfaction. After my guests were recovered from the consternation my account had produced, I requested also that Mr Jenkinson, a fellow-prisoner, might be admitted, and the gaoler granted my request with an air of unusual submission. The clanking of my son's irons was no sooner heard along the passage, than his sister ran impatiently to meet him; while Mr Burchell in the mean time asked me, if my son's name was George; to which replying in the affirmative, he still continued silent. As soon as my boy entered the room, I could perceive he regarded Mr Burchell with a look of astonishment and reverence. «Come on,» cried I, «my son; though we are fallen very low, yet Providence has been pleased to grant us some small relaxation from pain. Thy sister is restored to us, and there is her deliverer: to that brave man it is that I am indebted for yet having a daughter; give him, my boy, the hand of friendship, he deserves our warmest gratitude.»

My son seemed all this while regardless of what I said, and still continued fixed at respectful distance.——«My dear brother,» cried his sister, «why don't you thank my good deliverer? the brave should ever love each other.»

He still continued his silence and astonishment till our guest at last perceived himself to be known, and, assuming all his native dignity, desired my son to come forward. Never before had I seen any thing so truly majestic as the air he assumed upon this occasion. The greatest object in the universe, says a certain philosopher, is a good man struggling with adversity; yet there is still a greater, which is the good man that comes to relieve it. After he had regarded my son for some time with a superiour air,

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« I again find,» said he, « unthinking boy, that the same crime—» But here he was interrupted by one of the gaoler's servants, who came to inform us that a person of distinction, who had driven into town with a chariot and several attendants, sent his respects to the gentleman that was with us, and begged to know when he should think proper to be waited upon.—« Bid the fellow wait,» cried our guest, « till I shall have leisure to receive him;» and then turning to my son, « I again find, sir,» proceeded he, « that you are guilty of the same offence, for which you once had my reproof, and for which the law is now preparing its justest punishments. You imagine, perhaps, that a contempt for your own life gives you a right to take that of another: but where, sir, is the difference between a duellist who hazards a life of no value, and the murderer who acts with greater security? Is it any diminution of the gamester's fraud, when he alleges that he has staked a counter?»

« Alas, sir,» cried I, « whoever you are, pity the poor misguided creature; for what he has done was in obedience to a deluded mother, who, in the bitterness of her resentment, required him, upon her blessing, to avenge her quarrel. Here, sir, is the letter, which will serve to convince you of her imprudence, and diminish his guilt.»

He took the letter and hastily read it over. « This,» says he, « though not a perfect excuse, is such a palliation of his fault as induces me to forgive him. And now, sir,» continued he, kindly taking my son by the hand, « I see you are surprised at finding me here; but I have often visited prisons upon occasions less interesting. I am now come to see justice done a worthy man, for whom I have the most sincere esteem. I have long been a disguised spectator of thy father's benevolence. I have at his little

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dwelling enjoyed respect uncontaminated by flattery; and have received that happiness that courts could not give, from the amusing simplicity round his fire-side. My nephew has been apprised of my intentions of coming here, and I find is arrived. It would be wronging him and you to condemn him without examination: if there be injury, there shall be redress; and this I may say, without boasting, that none have ever taxed the injustice of Sir William Thornhill.»

We now found the personage whom we had so long entertained as a harmless amusing companion, was no other than the celebrated Sir William Thornhill, to whose virtues and singularities scarcely any were strangers. The poor Mr Burchell was in reality a man of large fortune and great interest, to whom senates listened with applause, and whom party heard with conviction; who was the friend of his country, but loyal to his king. My poor wife, recollecting her former familiarity, seemed to shrink with apprehension; but Sophia, who a few moments before thought him her own, now perceiving the immense distance to which he was removed by fortune, was unable to conceal her tears.

«Ah, sir,» cried my wife with a piteous aspect, «how is it possible that I can ever have your forgiveness? The slights you received from me the last time I had the honour of seeing you at our house, and the jokes which I audaciously threw out—these, sir, I fear, can never be forgiven.»

«My dear good lady,» returned he with a smile, «if you had your joke, I had my answer: I'll leave it to all the company if mine were not as good as yours. To say the truth, I know nobody whom I am disposed to be angry with at present, but the fellow who so frighted my little

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girl here. I had not even time to examine the rascal's person so as to describe him in an advertisement. Can you tell me, Sophia, my dear, whether you should know him again?»

«Indeed, sir,» replied she, «I can't be positive; yet now I recollect he had a large mark over one of his eyebrows.»—«I ask pardon, madam,» interrupted Jenkinson, who was by, «but be so good as to inform me if the fellow wore his own red hair?»—«Yes, I think so,» cried Sophia. «And did your honour,» continued he, turning to Sir William, «observe the length of his legs?»—«I can't be sure of their length,» cried the baronet, «but I am convinced of their swiftness; for he outran me, which is what I thought few men in the kingdom could have done.»—«Please your honour,» cried Jenkinson, «I know the man: it is certainly the same; the best runner in England; he has beaten Pinwire of Newcastle; Timothy Baxter is his name. I know him perfectly, and the very place of his retreat this moment. If your honour will bid Mr Gaoler let two of his men go with me, I'll engage to produce him to you in an hour at furthest.» Upon this the gaoler was called, who instantly appearing, Sir William demanded if he knew him. «Yes, please your honour,» replied the gaoler, «I know Sir William Thornhill well, and every body that knows any thing of him will desire to know more of him.» —«Well, then,» said the baronet, «my request is, that you will permit this man and two of your servants to go upon a message by my authority; and as I am in the commission of the peace, I undertake to secure you.»— «Your promise is sufficient,» replied the other, «and you may at a minute's warning send them over England whenever your honour thinks fit.»

In pursuance of the gaoler's compliance, Jenkinson was

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dispatched in search of Timothy Baxter, while we were amused with the assiduity of our youngest boy Bill, who had just come in, and climbed up Sir William's neck in order to kiss him. His mother was immediately going to chastise his familiarity, but the worthy man prevented her; and taking the child, all ragged as he was, upon his knee, « What, Bill, you chubby rogue,» cried he, « do you remember your old friend Burchell? and Dick too, my honest veteran, are you here? you shall find I have not forgot you.» So saying, he gave each a large piece of gingerbread, which the poor fellows ate very heartily, as they had got that morning but a very scanty breakfast.

We now sat down to dinner, which was almost cold; but previously, my arm still continuing painful, Sir William wrote a prescription, for he had made the study of physic his amusement, and was more than moderately skilled in the profession: this being sent to an apothecary who lived in the place, my arm was dressed, and I found almost instantaneous relief. We were waited upon at dinner by the gaoler himself, who was willing to do our guest all the honour in his power. But before we had well dined, another message was brought from his nephew, desiring permission to appear in order to vindicate his innocence and honour; with which request the baronet complied, and desired Mr Thornhill to be introduced.

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CHAPTER XXXI.

Former Benevolence now repaid with unexpected interest.

Mr Thornhill made his appearance with a smile, which he seldom wanted, and was going to embrace his uncle, which the other repulsed with an air of disdain. « No fawning, sir, at present,» cried the baronet, with a look of severity; « the only way to my heart is by the road of honour; but here I only see complicated instances of falsehood, cowardice, and oppression. How is it, sir, that this poor man, for whom I know you professed a friendship, is used thus hardly? His daughter vilely seduced as a recompense for his hospitality, and he himself thrown into prison, perhaps but for resenting the insult? His son, too, whom you feared to face as a man——»

« Is it possible, sir,» interrupted his nephew, « that my uncle could object that as a crime, which his repeated instructions alone have persuaded me to avoid?»

« Your rebuke,» cried Sir William, « is just; you have acted in this instance prudently and well, though not quite as your father would have done: my brother, indeed, was the soul of honour; but thou——Yes, you have acted in this instance perfectly right, and it has my warmest approbation.»

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« And I hope,» said his nephew, « that the rest of my conduct will not be found to deserve censure. I appeared, sir, with this gentleman's daughter at some places of public amusement: thus, what was levity, scandal called by a harsher name, and it was reported that I had debauched her. I waited on her father in person, willing to clear the thing to his satisfaction, and he received me only with insult and abuse. As for the rest, with regard to his being here, my attorney and steward can best inform you, as I commit the management of business entirely to them. If he has contracted debts, and is unwilling, or even unable, to pay them, it is their business to proceed in this manner; and I see no hardship or injustice in pursuing the most legal means of redress.»

« If this,» cried Sir William, « be as you have stated it, there is nothing unpardonable in your offence; and though your conduct might have been more generous in not suffering this gentleman to be oppressed by subordinate tyranny, yet it has been at least equitable.»

« He cannot contradict a single particular,» replied the Squire; « I defy him to do so; and several of my servants are ready to attest what I say. Thus, sir,» continued he, finding that I was silent, for in fact I could not contradict him; « thus, sir, my own innocence is vindicated: but though, at your entreaty, I am ready to forgive this gentleman every other offence, yet his attempts to lessen me in your esteem excite a resentment that I cannot govern; and this, too, at a time when his son was actually preparing to take away my life;—this, I say, was such guilt, that I am determined to let the law take its course. I have here the challenge that was sent me, and two witnesses to prove it: one of my servants has been wounded dangerously; and even though my uncle himself should

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dissuade me, which I know he will not, yet I will see public justice done, and he shall suffer for it.»

« Thou monster,» cried my wife, « hast thou not had vengeance enough already, but must my poor boy feel thy cruelty? I hope that good Sir William will protect us; for my son is as innocent as a child: I am sure he is, and never did harm to man.»

« Madam,» replied the good man, « your wishes for his safety are not greater than mine; but I am sorry to find his guilt too plain; and if my nephew persists—» But the appearance of Jenkinson and the gaoler's two servants now called off our attention, who entered, hauling in a tall man, very genteelly dressed, and answering the description already given of the ruffian who had carried off my daughter:—« Here,» cried Jenkinson, pulling him in, « here we have him; and if ever there was a candidate for Tyburn, this is one.»

The moment Mr Thornhill perceived the prisoner, and Jenkinson who had him in custody, he seemed to shrink back with terror. His face became pale with conscious guilt, and he would have withdrawn; but Jenkinson, who perceived his design, stopped him.—« What, 'Squire,» cried he, « are you ashamed of your two old acquaintances, Jenkinson and Baxter? but this is the way that all great men forget their friends, though I am resolved we will not forget you. Our prisoner, please your honour,» continued he, turning to Sir William, « has already confessed all. This is the gentleman reported to be so dangerously wounded. He declares that it was Mr Thornhill who first put him upon this affair; that he gave him the clothes he now wears, to appear like a gentleman; and furnished him with the post-chaise. The plan was laid between them, that he should carry off the young lady to a place

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of safety, and that there he should threaten and terrify her; but Mr Thornhill was to come in in the mean time, as if by accident, to her rescue; and that they should fight a while, and then he was to run off,—by which Mr Thornhill would have the better opportunity of gaining her affections himself, under the character of her defender.»

Sir William remembered the coat to have been worn by his nephew, and all the rest the prisoner himself confirmed by a more circumstantial account; concluding, that Mr Thornhill had often declared to him that he was in love with both sisters at the same time.

« Heavens!» cried Sir William, « what a viper have I been fostering in my bosom! And so fond of public justice, too, as he seemed to be! But he shall have it; secure him, Mr Gaoler:—yet, hold; I fear there is not legal evidence to detain him.»

Upon this Mr Thornhill, with the utmost humility, entreated that two such abandoned wretches might not be admitted as evidences against him, but that his servants should be examined.—« Your servants!» replied Sir William; « wretch! call them yours no longer: but come, let us hear what those fellows have to say; let his butler be called.»

When the butler was introduced, he soon perceived by his former master's looks that all his power was now over. « Tell me,» cried Sir William sternly, « have you ever seen your master and that fellow dressed up in his clothes in company together;»—« Yes, please your honour,» cried the butler; « a thousand times: he was the man that always brought him his ladies.»—« How,» interrupted young Mr Thornhill, « this to my face!»—« Yes,» replied the butler, « or to any man's face. To tell you a truth, Master Thornhill, I never either loved or liked you,

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and I don't care if I tell you now a piece of my mind.»—« Now, then,» cried Jenkinson, « tell his honour whether you know any thing of me.»—« I can't say,» replied the butler, « that I know much good of you. The night that gentleman's daughter was deluded to our house, you were one of them.»—« So, then,» cried Sir William, « I find you have brought a very fine witness to prove your innocence: thou stain to humanity! to associate with such wretches! But,» continuing his examination, « you tell me, Mr Butler, that this was the person who brought him this old gentleman's daughter.»—« No, please your honour,» replied the butler, « he did not bring her, for the 'Squire himself undertook that business; but he brought the priest that pretended to marry them.»—« It is but too true,» cried Jenkinson, « I cannot deny it; that was the employment assigned me, and I confess it to my confusion.»

« Good heavens!» exclaimed the baronet, « how every new discovery of his villany alarms me. All his guilt is now too plain, and I find his prosecution was dictated by tyranny, cowardice, and revenge. At my request, Mr Gaoler, set this young officer, now your prisoner, free, and trust to me for the consequences. I'll make it my business to set the affair in a proper light to my friend the magistrate who has committed him.—But where is the unfortunate young lady herself? Let her appear to confront this wretch: I long to know by what arts he has seduced her. Entreat her to come in. Where is she?»

« Ah, sir,» said I, « that question stings me to the heart: I was once indeed happy in a daughter, but her miseries——» Another interruption here prevented me; for who should make her appearance but Miss Arabella Wilmot, who was next day to have been married to Mr Thornhill. Nothing could equal her surprise at seeing

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Sir William and his nephew here before her; for her arrival was quite accidental. It happened that she and the old gentleman her father were passing through the town on their way to her aunt's, who had insisted that her nuptials with Mr Thornhill should be consummated at her house; but stopping for refreshment, they put up at an inn at the other end of the town. It was there, from the window, that the young lady happened to observe one of my little boys playing in the street, and instantly sending a footman to bring the child to her, she learned from him some account of our misfortunes; but was still kept ignorant of young Mr Thornhill's being the cause. Though her father made several remonstrances on the impropriety of going to a prison to visit us, yet they were ineffectual; she desired the child to conduct her, which he did, and it was thus she surprised us at a juncture so unexpected.

Nor can I go on without a reflection on those accidental meetings, which, though they happen every day, seldom excite our surprise but upon some extraordinary occasion. To what a fortuitous concurrence do we not owe every pleasure and convenience of our lives! How many seeming accidents must unite before we can be clothed or fed! The peasant must be disposed to labour, the shower must fall, the wind fill the merchant's sail, or numbers must want the usual supply.

We all continued silent for some moments, while my charming pupil, which was the name I generally gave this young lady, united in her looks compassion and astonishment, which gave new finishing to her beauty. « Indeed, my dear Mr Thornhill,» cried she to the 'Squire, who she supposed was come here to succour, and not to oppress us, « I take it a little unkindly that you should come here without me, or never inform me of the situation of a family

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so dear to us both: you know I should take as much pleasure in contributing to the relief of my reverend old master here, whom I shall ever esteem, as you can. But I find that, like your uncle, you take a pleasure in doing good in secret.»

« He find pleasure in doing good!» cried Sir William, interrupting her. « No, my dear, his pleasures are as base as he is. You see in him, madam, as complete a villain as ever disgraced humanity. A wretch, who, after having deluded this poor man's daughter, after plotting against the innocence of her sister, has thrown the father into prison, and the eldest son into fetters, because he had the courage to face her betrayer. And give me leave, madam, now to congratulate you upon an escape from the embraces of such a monster.»

« O goodness,» cried the lovely girl, « how have I been deceived! Mr Thornhill informed me for certain that this gentleman's eldest son, Captain Primrose, was gone off to America with his new-married lady.»

« My sweetest miss,» cried my wife, « he has told you nothing but falsehoods. My son George never left the kingdom, nor ever was married.—Though you have forsaken him, he has always loved you too well to think of any body else; and I have heard him say, he would die a bachelor for your sake.» She then proceeded to expatiate upon the sincerity of her son's passion. She set his duel with Mr Thornhill in a proper light; from thence she made a rapid digression to the 'Squire's debaucheries, his pretended marriages, and ended with a most insulting picture of his cowardice.

« Good Heaven!» cried Miss Wilmot, « how very near have I been to the brink of ruin! Ten thousand falsehoods has this gentleman told me: he had at last art

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enough to persuade me, that my promise to the only man I esteemed was no longer binding, since he had been unfaithful. By his falsehoods I was taught to detest one equally brave and generous.»

But by this time my son was freed from the encumbrances of justice, as the person supposed to be wounded was detected to be an impostor. Mr Jenkinson also, who had acted as his *valet de chambre*, had dressed up his hair, and furnished him with whatever was necessary to make a genteel appearance. He now therefore entered, handsomely dressed in his regimentals; and without vanity (for I am above it), he appeared as handsome a fellow as ever wore a military dress. As he entered, he made Miss Wilmot a modest and distant bow, for he was not as yet acquainted with the change which the eloquence of his mother had wrought in his favour. But no decorums could restrain the impatience of his blushing mistress to be forgiven. Her tears, her looks, all contributed to discover the real sensations of her heart, for having forgotten her former promise, and having suffered herself to be deluded by an impostor. My son appeared amazed at her condescension, and could scarcely believe it real.—«Sure, madam,» cried he, «this is but delusion! I can never have merited this! To be blessed thus is to be too happy.»—«No, sir,» replied she; «I have been deceived, basely deceived, else nothing could have ever made me unjust to my promise. You know my friendship, you have long known it; but forget what I have done, and as you once had my warmest vows of constancy, you shall now have them repeated; and be assured, that if your Arabella cannot be yours, she shall never be another's.»—«And no other's you shall be,» cried Sir William, «if I have any influence with your father.»

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This hint was sufficient for my son Moses, who immediately flew to the inn where the old gentleman was, to inform him of every circumstance that had happened. But in the mean time the 'Squire, perceiving that he was on every side undone, now finding that no hopes were left from flattery or dissimulation, concluded that his wisest way would be to turn and face his pursuers. Thus, laying aside all shame, he appeared the open hardy villain. « I find, then,» cried he, « that I am to expect no justice here; but I am resolved it shall be done me. You shall know, sir,» turning to Sir William, « I am no longer a poor dependant upon your favours. I scorn them. Nothing can keep Miss Wilmot's fortune from me, which, I thank her father's assiduity, is pretty large. The articles and a bond for her fortune are signed, and safe in my possession. It was her fortune, not her person, that induced me to wish for this match; and possessed of the one, let who will take the other.»

This was an alarming blow. Sir William was sensible of the justice of his claims, for he had been instrumental in drawing up the marriage articles himself. Miss Wilmot, therefore, perceiving that her fortune was irretrievably lost, turning to my son, she asked if the loss of fortune could lessen her value to him? « Though fortune,» said she, « is out of my power, at least I have my heart to give.»

« And that, madam,» cried her real lover, « was indeed all that you ever had to give; at least all that I ever thought worth the acceptance. And I now protest, my Arabella, by all that's happy, your want of fortune this moment increases my pleasure, as it serves to convince my sweet girl of my sincerity.»

Mr Wilmot now entering, he seemed not a little pleased at the danger his daughter had just escaped, and readily

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consented to a dissolution of the match. But finding that her fortune, which was secured to Mr Thornhill by bond, would not be given up, nothing could exceed his disappointment. He now saw that his money must all go to enrich one who had no fortune of his own. He could bear his being a rascal, but to want an equivalent to his daughter's fortune was wormwood. He sat therefore for some minutes employed in the most mortifying speculations, till Sir William attempted to lessen his anxiety.—« I must confess, sir,» cried he, « that your present disappointment does not entirely displease me. Your immoderate passion for wealth is now justly punished. But though the young lady cannot be rich, she has still a competence sufficient to give content. Here you see an honest young soldier, who is willing to take her without fortune: they have long loved each other; and for the friendship I bear his father, my interest shall not be wanting in his promotion. Leave then that ambition which disappoints you, and for once admit that happiness which courts your acceptance.»

« Sir William,» replied the old gentleman, « be assured I never yet forced her inclinations, nor will I now. If she still continues to love this young gentleman, let her have him with all my heart. There is still, thank Heaven, some fortune left, and your promise will make it something more. Only let my old friend here (meaning me) give me a promise of settling six thousand pounds upon my girl if ever he should come to his fortune, and I am ready this night to be the first to join them together.»

As it now remained with me to make the young couple happy, I readily gave a promise of making the settlement he required, which from one who had such little expectations as I, was no great favour.—We had now, therefore,

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the satisfaction of seeing them fly into each other's arms in a transport.—« After all my misfortunes,» cried my son George, « to be thus rewarded! Sure this is more than I could ever have presumed to hope for. To be possessed of all that 's good, and after such an interval of pain! My warmest wishes could never rise so high!»

« Yes, my George,» returned his lovely bride, « now let the wretch take my fortune; since you are happy without it, so am I. O what an exchange have I made from the basest of men to the dearest, best!—Let him enjoy our fortune, I now can be happy even in indigence.»—« And I promise you,» cried the 'Squire, with a malicious grin, « that I shall be very happy with what you despise.»—« Hold, hold, sir,» cried Jenkinson, « there are two words to that bargain. As for that lady's fortune, sir, you shall never touch a single stiver of it. Pray, your honour,» continued he to Sir William, « can the 'Squire have this lady's fortune if he be married to another?»—« How can you make such a simple demand?» replied the baronet: « undoubtedly he cannot.»—« I am sorry for that,» cried Jenkinson; « for as this gentleman and I have been old fellow-sporters, I have a friendship for him. But I must declare, well as I love him, that his contract is not worth a tobacco-stopper, for he is married already.» « You lie, like a rascal,» returned the 'Squire, who seemed roused by this insult; « I never was legally married to any woman.»

« Indeed, begging your honour's pardon,» replied the other, « you were; and I hope you will show a proper return of friendship to your own honest Jenkinson, who brings you a wife; and if the company restrain their curiosity a few minutes, they shall see her.» So saying, he went off with his usual celerity, and left us all unable to form any probable conjecture as to his design. « Ay, let

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him go,» cried the 'Squire; «whatever else I may have done, I defy him there. I am too old now to be frightened with squibs.»

«I am surprised,» said the baronet, «what the fellow can intend by this. Some low piece of humour, I suppose.» —«Perhaps, sir,» replied I, «he may have a more serious meaning. For when we reflect on the various schemes this gentleman has laid to seduce innocence, perhaps some one, more artful than the rest, has been found able to deceive him. When we consider what numbers he has ruined, how many parents now feel with anguish the infamy and the contamination which he has brought into their families, it would not surprise me if some one of them— Amazement! Do I see my lost daughter? do I hold her? It is, it is my life, my happiness. I thought thee lost, my Olivia, yet still I hold thee—and still thou shalt live to bless me.» The warmest transports of the fondest lover were not greater than mine, when I saw him introduce my child, and held my daughter in my arms, whose silence only spoke her raptures.

«And art thou returned to me, my darling,» cried I, «to be my comfort in age!»——«That she is,» cried Jenkinson; «and make much of her, for she is your own honourable child, and as honest a woman as any in the whole room, let the other be who she will. And as for you, 'Squire, as sure as you stand there, this young lady is your lawful wedded wife. And to convince you that I speak nothing but truth, here is the license by which you were married together.»—So saying, he put the license into the baronet's hands, who read it, and found it perfect in every respect. «And now, gentlemen,» continued he, «I find you are surprised at all this; but a few words will explain the diffi

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culty. That there 'Squire of renown, for whom I have a great friendship (but that 's between ourselves), has often employed me in doing odd little things for him. Among the rest, he commissioned me to procure him a false license and a false priest, in order to deceive this young lady. But as I was very much his friend, what did I do, but went and got a true license and a true priest, and married them both as fast as the cloth could make them. Perhaps you 'll think it was generosity that made me do all this: but no; to my shame I confess it, my only design was to keep the license, and let the 'Squire know that I could prove it upon him whenever I thought proper, and so make him come down whenever I wanted money.» A burst of pleasure now seemed to fill the whole apartment; our joy reached even to the common room, where the prisoners themselves sympathized,

> And shook their chains
> In transport and rude harmony.

Happiness was expanded upon every face, and even Olivia's cheek seemed flushed with pleasure. To be thus restored to reputation, to friends and fortune at once, was a rapture sufficient to stop the progress of decay, and restore former health and vivacity. But perhaps among all there was not one who felt sincerer pleasure than I. Still holding the dear loved child in my arms, I asked my heart if these transports were not delusion. « How could you,» cried I, turning to Mr Jenkinson, « how could you add to my miseries by the story of her death? But it matters not; my pleasure at finding her again is more than a recompense for the pain.»

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« As to your question,» replied Jenkinson, « that is easily answered. I thought the only probable means of freeing you from prison, was by submitting to the 'Squire, and consenting to his marriage with the other young lady. But these you had vowed never to grant while your daughter was living; there was therefore no other method to bring things to bear, but by persuading you that she was dead. I prevailed on your wife to join in the deceit, and we have not had a fit opportunity of undeceiving you till now.»

In the whole assembly there now appeared only two faces that did not glow with transport. Mr Thornhill's assurance had entirely forsaken him: he now saw the gulf of infamy and want before him, and trembled to take the plunge. He therefore fell on his knees before his uncle, and in a voice of piercing misery implored compassion. Sir William was going to spurn him away, but at my request he raised him, and, after pausing a few moments, « Thy vices, crimes, and ingratitude,» cried he, « deserve no tenderness; yet thou shalt not be entirely forsaken—a bare competence shall be supplied to support the wants of life, but not its follies. This young lady, thy wife, shall be put in possession of a third part of that fortune which once was thine, and from her tenderness alone thou art to expect any extraordinary supplies for the future.» He was going to express his gratitude for such kindness in a set speech; but the baronet prevented him, by bidding him not aggravate his meanness, which was already but too apparent. He ordered him at the same time to be gone, and from all his former domestics to choose one, such as he should think proper, which was all that should be granted to attend him.

As soon as he left us, Sir William very politely stepped up to his new niece with a smile, and wished her joy. His

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example was followed by Miss Wilmot and her father. My wife too kissed her daughter with much affection; as, to use her own expression, she was now made an honest woman of. Sophia and Moses followed in turn, and even our benefactor Jenkinson desired to be admitted to that honour. Our satisfaction seemed scarcely capable of increase. Sir William, whose greatest pleasure was in doing good, now looked round with a countenance open as the sun, and saw nothing but joy in the looks of all except that of my daughter Sophia, who, for some reasons we could not comprehend, did not seem perfectly satisfied. « I think, now,» cried he, with a smile, « that all the company except one or two seem perfectly happy. There only remains an act of justice for me to do. You are sensible, sir,» continued he, turning to me, « of the obligations we both owe Mr Jenkinson, and it is but just we should both reward him for it. Miss Sophia will, I am sure, make him very happy, and he shall have from me five hundred pounds as her fortune; and upon this I am sure they can live very comfortably together. Come, Miss Sophia, what say you to this match of my making? Will you have him?»——My poor girl seemed almost sinking into her mother's arms at the hideous proposal.—« Have him, sir!» cried she faintly: « No, sir, never.»—« What!» cried he again, « not have Mr Jenkinson, your benefactor, a handsome young fellow, with five hundred pounds, and good expectations?»—« I beg, sir,» returned she, scarcely able to speak, « that you'll desist, and not make me so very wretched.»——« Was ever such obstinacy known?» cried he again, « to refuse a man whom the family has such infinite obligations to, who has preserved your sister, and who has five hundred pounds! What, not have him?»——« No, sir, never,» re-

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plied she angrily; « I 'd sooner die first. »—« If that be the case, then, » cried he, « if you will not have him—I think I must have you myself. » And so saying, he caught her to his breast with ardour. « My loveliest, my most sensible of girls, » cried he, « how could you ever think your own Burchell could deceive you, or that Sir William Thornhill could ever cease to admire a mistress that loved him for himself alone? I have for some years sought for a woman, who, a stranger to my fortune, could think that I had merit as a man. After having tried in vain, even amongst the pert and the ugly, how great at last must be my rapture to have made a conquest over such sense and such heavenly beauty! » Then turning to Jenkinson: « As I cannot, sir, part with this young lady myself, for she has taken a fancy to the cut of my face, all the recompense I can make is to give you her fortune; and you may call upon my steward to-morrow for five hundred pounds. » Thus, we had all our compliments to repeat, and Lady Thornhill underwent the same round of ceremony that her sister had done before. In the mean time, Sir William's gentleman appeared to tell us that the equipages were ready to carry us to the inn, where every thing was prepared for our reception. My wife and I led the van, and left those gloomy mansions of sorrow. The generous baronet ordered forty pounds to be distributed among the prisoners, and Mr Wilmot, induced by his example, gave half that sum. We were received below by the shouts of the villagers, and I saw and shook by the hand two or three of my honest parishioners, who were among the number. They attended us to our inn, where a sumptuous entertainment was provided, and coarser provisions were distributed in great quantities among the populace.

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After supper, as my spirits were exhausted by the alternation of pleasure and pain which they had sustained during the day, I asked permission to withdraw; and leaving the company in the midst of their mirth, as soon as I found myself alone, I poured out my heart in gratitude to the Giver of joy as well as of sorrow, and then slept undisturbed till morning.

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CHAPTER XXXII.

The Conclusion.

THE next morning as soon as I awaked, I found my eldest son sitting by my bed-side, who came to increase my joy with another turn of fortune in my favour. First having released me from the settlement that I had made the day before in his favour, he let me know that my merchant who had failed in town was arrested at Antwerp, and there had given up effects to a much greater amount than what was due to his creditors. My boy's generosity pleased me almost as much as this unlooked-for good fortune; but I had some doubts whether I ought in justice to accept his offer. While I was pondering upon this, Sir William entered the room, to whom I communicated my doubts. His opinion was, that as my son was already possessed of a very affluent fortune by his marriage, I might accept his offer without any hesitation. His business, however, was to inform me, that as he had the night before sent for the licenses, and expected them every hour, he hoped that I would not refuse my assistance in making all the company happy that morning. A footman entered while we were speaking, to tell us that the messenger was returned; and as I was by this time ready, I went down, where I found he whole company as merry as affluence and innocence

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could make them. However, as they were now preparing for a very solemn ceremony, their laughter entirely displeased me. I told them of the grave, becoming, and sublime deportment they should assume upon this mystical occasion, and read them two homilies, and a thesis of my own composing, in order to prepare them. Yet they still seemed perfectly refractory and ungovernable. Even as we were going along to church, to which I led the way, all gravity had quite forsaken them, and I was often tempted to turn back in indignation. In church a new dilemma arose, which promised no easy solution. This was, which couple should be married first. My son's bride warmly insisted that Lady Thornhill (that was to be) should take the lead; but this the other refused with equal ardour, protesting she would not be guilty of such rudeness for the world. The argument was supported for some time between both with equal obstinacy and good-breeding. But as I stood all this time with my book ready, I was at last quite tired of the contest; and shutting it, «I perceive,» cried I, «that none of you have a mind to be married, and I think we had as good go back again; for I suppose there will be no business done here to-day.»— This at once reduced them to reason. The baronet and his lady were first married, and then my son and his lovely partner.

I had previously that morning given orders that a coach should be sent for my honest neighbour Flamborough and his family; by which means, upon our return to the inn, we had the pleasure of finding the two Miss Flamboroughs alighted before us. Mr Jenkinson gave his hand to the eldest, and my son Moses led up the other (and I have since found that he has taken a real liking to the girl, and my consent and bounty he shall have, whenever he

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thinks proper to demand them). We were no sooner returned to the inn, but numbers of my parishioners, hearing of my success, came to congratulate me; but among the rest were those who rose to rescue me, and whom I formerly rebuked with such sharpness. I told the story to Sir William, my son-in-law, who went out and reproved them with great severity; but finding them quite disheartened by his harsh reproof, he gave them half a guinea a-piece to drink his health, and raise their dejected spirits.

Soon after this we were called to a very genteel entertainment, which was dressed by Mr Thornhill's cook. And it may not be improper to observe, with respect to that gentleman, that he now resides, in quality of companion, at a relation's house, being very well liked, and seldom sitting at the side-table, except when there is no room at the other; for they make no stranger of him. His time is pretty much taken up in keeping his relation, who is a little melancholy, in spirits, and in learning to blow the French horn. My eldest daughter, however, still remembers him with regret; and she has even told me, though I make a great secret of it, that when he reforms she may be brought to relent.—But to return, for I am not apt to digress thus; when we were to sit down to dinner our ceremonies were going to be renewed. The question was, whether my eldest daughter, as being a matron, should not sit above the two young brides; but the debate was cut short by my son George, who proposed that the company should sit indiscriminately, every gentleman by his lady. This was received with great approbation by all, excepting my wife, who, I could perceive, was not perfectly satisfied, as she expected to have had the pleasure of sitting at the head of the table, and carving the meat for all the company. But, notwithstanding this, it is impossible to de-

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scribe our good-humour. I can't say whether we had more wit among us now than usual; but I am certain we had more laughing, which answered the end as well. One jest I particularly remember: old Mr Wilmot drinking to Moses, whose head was turned another way, my son replied, « Madam, I thank you. » Upon which the old gentleman, winking upon the rest of the company, observed, that he was thinking of his mistress: at which jest I thought the two Miss Flamboroughs would have died with laughing. As soon as dinner was over, according to my old custom, I requested that the table might be taken away, to have the pleasure of seeing all my family assembled once more by a cheerful fire-side. My two little ones sat upon each knee, the rest of the company by their partners. I had nothing now on this side of the grave to wish for; all my cares were over; my pleasure was unspeakable. It now only remained, that my gratitude in good fortune should exceed my former submission in adversity.

END OF THE VICAR OF WAKEFIELD.

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AN

INQUIRY

INTO

THE PRESENT STATE

OF

POLITE LEARNING.

Εμοι προς φιλοσοφους εστι φιλια· προς μεν τοι σοφιστας η γραμματιστας· ουτε νυν εστι φιλια μητε υστερον ποτε γενοιτο.

Tolerabile si Ædificia nostra diruerent Ædificandi capaces.

The first edition of this work appeared in 1759, and the second was printed in 1774.

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AN

INQUIRY

INTO

THE PRESENT STATE

OF

POLITE LEARNING.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

It has been so long the practice to represent literature as declining, that every renewal of this complaint now comes with diminished influence. The public has been so often excited by a false alarm, that at present the nearer we approach the threatened period of decay, the more our security increases.

It will now probably be said, that, taking the decay of genius for granted, as I do, argues either resentment or partiality. The writer possessed of fame, it may be asserted, is willing to enjoy it without a rival, by lessening every competitor; or, if unsuccessful, he is desirous to turn upon others the contempt which is levelled at himself; and being convicted at the bar of literary justice, hopes for pardon by accusing every brother of the same profession.

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Sensible of this, I am at a loss where to find an apology for persisting to arraign the merit of the age; for joining in a cry which the judicious have long since left to be kept up by the vulgar; and for adopting the sentiments of the multitude, in a performance that at best can please only a few.

Complaints of our degeneracy in literature, as well as in morals, I own, have been frequently exhibited of late, but seem to be enforced more with the ardour of devious declamation than the calmness of deliberate inquiry. The dullest critic, who strives at a reputation for delicacy, by showing he cannot be pleased, may pathetically assure us, that our taste is upon the decline; may consign every modern performance to oblivion, and bequeath nothing to posterity, except the labours of our ancestors, or his own. Such general invective, however, conveys no instruction: all it teaches is, that the writer dislikes an age by which he is probably disregarded. The manner of being useful on the subject would be, to point out the symptoms, to investigate the causes, and direct to the remedies of the approaching decay. This is a subject hitherto unattempted in criticism,—perhaps it is the only subject in which criticism can be useful.

How far the writer is equal to such an undertaking the reader must determine; yet perhaps his observations may be just, though his manner of expressing them should only serve as an example of the errors he undertakes to reprove.

Novelty, however, is not permitted to usurp the place of reason; it may attend, but shall not conduct the inquiry. But it should be observed, that the more original any performance is, the more it is liable to deviate; for cautious stupidity is always in the right.

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CHAPTER II.

The Causes which contribute to the Decline of Learning.

If we consider the revolutions which have happened in the commonwealth of letters, survey the rapid progress of learning in one period of antiquity, or its amazing decline in another, we shall be almost induced to accuse nature of partiality; as if she had exhausted all her efforts in adorning one age, while she left the succeeding entirely neglected. It is not to nature, however, but to ourselves alone, that this partiality must be ascribed: the seeds of excellence are sown in every age, and it is wholly owing to a wrong direction in the passions or pursuits of mankind, that they have not received the proper cultivation.

As, in the best regulated societies, the very laws which at first give the government solidity, may in the end contribute to its dissolution, so the efforts which might have promoted learning in its feeble commencement, may, if continued, retard its progress. The paths of science, which were at first intricate because untrodden, may at last grow toilsome, because too much frequented. As learning advances, the candidates for its honours become more numerous, and the acquisition of fame more uncertain: the modest may despair of attaining it, and the opulent think it too precarious to pursue. Thus the task

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of supporting the honour of the times may at last devolve on indigence and effrontery, while learning must partake of the contempt of its professors.

To illustrate these assertions, it may be proper to take a slight review of the decline of ancient learning; to consider how far its depravation was owing to the impossibility of supporting continued perfection; in what respects it proceeded from voluntary corruption; and how far it was hastened on by accident. If modern learning be compared with ancient, in these different lights, a parallel between both, which has hitherto produced only vain dispute, may contribute to amusement, perhaps to instruction. We shall thus be enabled to perceive what period of antiquity the present age most resembles, whether we are making advances towards excellence, or retiring again to primeval obscurity; we shall thus be taught to acquiesce in those defects which it is impossible to prevent, and reject all faulty innovations, though offered under the specious titles of improvement.

Learning, when planted in any country, is transient and fading, nor does it flourish till slow gradations of improvement have naturalized it to the soil. It makes feeble advances, begins among the vulgar, and rises into reputation among the great. It cannot be established in a state at once, by introducing the learned of other countries; these may grace a court, but seldom enlighten a kingdom. Ptolemy Philadelphus, Constantine Porphyrogeneta, Alfred, or Charlemagne, might have invited learned foreigners into their dominions, but could not establish learning. While in the radiance of royal favour, every art and science seemed to flourish; but when that was withdrawn, they quickly felt the rigours of a strange climate, and with exotic constitutions perished by neglect.

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As the arts and sciences are slow in coming to maturity, it is requisite, in order to their perfection, that the state should be permanent which gives them reception. There are numberless attempts without success, and experiments without conclusion, between the first rudiments of an art, and its utmost perfection; between the outlines of a shadow, and the picture of an Apelles. Leisure is required to go through the tedious interval, to join the experience of predecessors to our own, or enlarge our views, by building on the ruined attempts of former adventurers. All this may be performed in a society of long continuance, but if the kingdom be but of short duration, as was the case of Arabia, learning seems coeval, sympathizes with its political struggles, and is annihilated in its dissolution.

But permanence in a state is not alone sufficient; it is requisite also for this end that it should be free. Naturalists assure us, that all animals are sagacious in proportion as they are removed from the tyranny of others. In native liberty, the elephant is a citizen, and the beaver an architect; but whenever the tyrant man intrudes upon their community, their spirit is broken, they seem anxious only for safety, and their intellects suffer an equal diminution with their prosperity. The parallel will hold with regard to mankind. Fear naturally represses invention; benevolence, ambition: for in a nation of slaves, as in the despotic governments of the East, to labour after fame is to be a candidate for danger.

To attain literary excellence also, it is requisite that the soil and climate should, as much as possible, conduce to happiness. The earth must supply man with the necessaries of life, before he has leisure or inclination to pursue more refined enjoyments. The climate also must be equally indulgent; for in too warm a region the mind is

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relaxed into languor, and by the opposite excess is chilled into torpid inactivity.

These are the principal advantages which tend to the improvement of learning; and all these were united in the states of Greece and Rome.

We must now examine what hastens, or prevents its decline.

Those who behold the phenomena of nature, and content themselves with the view without inquiring into their causes, are perhaps wiser than is generally imagined. In this manner our rude ancestors were acquainted with facts; and poetry, which helped the imagination and the memory, was thought the most proper vehicle for conveying their knowledge to posterity. It was the poet who harmonized the ungrateful accents of his native dialect, who lifted it above common conversation, and shaped its rude combinations into order. From him the orator formed a style; and though poetry first rose out of prose, in turn it gave birth to every prosaic excellence. Musical period, concise expression, and delicacy of sentiment, were all excellencies derived from the poet; in short, he not only preceded but formed the orator, philosopher, and historian.

When the observations of past ages were collected, philosophy next began to examine their causes. She had numberless facts from which to draw proper inferences, and poetry had taught her the strongest expression to enforce them. Thus the Greek philosophers, for instance, exerted all their happy talents in the investigation of truth, and the production of beauty. They saw, that there was more excellence in captivating the judgment, than in raising a momentary astonishment. In their arts, they imitated only such parts of nature as might please in the

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representation; in the sciences, they cultivated such parts of knowledge as it was every man's duty to know. Thus learning was encouraged, protected, honoured; and in its turn it adorned, strengthened, and harmonized the community.

But as the mind is vigorous and active, and experiment is dilatory and painful, the spirit of philosophy being excited, the reasoner, when destitute of experiment, had recourse to theory, and gave up what was useful for refinement.

Critics, sophists, grammarians, rhetoricians, and commentators, now began to figure in the literary commonwealth. In the dawn of science such are generally modest, and not entirely useless. Their performances serve to mark the progress of learning, though they seldom contribute to its improvement. But as nothing but speculation was required in making proficients in their respective departments, so neither the satire nor the contempt of the wise, though Socrates was of the number, nor the laws levelled at them by the state, though Cato was in the legislature, could prevent their approaches.[1] Possessed of all the advantages of unfeeling dulness, laborious, insensible, and persevering, they still proceeded mending and mending every work of genius, or, to speak without irony, undermining all that was polite and useful. Libraries were loaded, but not enriched, with their labours, while the fatigue of reading their explanatory comments was tenfold that which might suffice for understanding the original, and their works effectually increased our application, by professing to remove it.

Against so obstinate and irrefragable an enemy, what

[1] Vide Sueton. Hist. Gram.

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could avail the unsupported sallies of genius, or the opposition of transitory resentment? In short, they conquered by persevering, claimed the right of dictating upon every work of taste, sentiment, or genius, and at last, when destitute of other employment, like the supernumerary domestics of the great, made work for each other.

They now took upon them to teach poetry to those who wanted genius; and the power of disputing, to those who knew nothing of the subject in debate. It was observed how some of the most admired poets had copied nature. From these they collected dry rules, dignified with long names, and such were obtruded upon the public for their improvement. Common sense would be apt to suggest, that the art might be studied to more advantage, rather by imitation than precept. It might suggest, that those rules were collected, not from nature, but a copy of nature, and would consequently give us still fainter resemblances of original beauty. It might still suggest, that explained wit makes but a feeble impression; that the observations of others are soon forgotten, those made by ourselves are permanent and useful. But it seems, understandings of every size were to be mechanically instructed in poetry. If the reader was too dull to relish the beauties of Virgil, the comment of Servius was ready to brighten his imagination; if Terence could not raise him to a smile, Evantius was at hand, with a long-winded scholium to increase his titillation. Such rules are calculated to make blockheads talk, but all the lemmata of the Lyceum are unable to give him feeling.

But it would be endless to recount all the absurdities which were hatched in the schools of those specious idlers; be it sufficient to say, that they increased as learning improved, but swarmed on its decline. It was then that

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every work of taste was buried in long comments, every useful subject in morals was distinguished away into casuistry, and doubt and subtlety characterized the learning of the age. Metrodorus, Valerius Probus, Aulus Gellius, Pedianus, Boethius, and a hundred others, to be acquainted with whom might show much reading, and but little judgment; these, I say, made choice each of an author, and delivered all their load of learning on his back. Shame to our ancestors! many of their works have reached our times entire, while Tacitus himself has suffered mutilation.

In a word, the commonwealth of literature was at last wholly overrun by these studious triflers. Men of real genius were lost in the multitude, or, as in a world of fools it were folly to aim at being an only exception, obliged to conform to every prevailing absurdity of the times. Original productions seldom appeared, and learning, as if grown superannuated, bestowed all its panegyric upon the vigour of its youth, and turned encomiast upon its former achievements.

It is to these, then, that the depravation of ancient polite learning is principally to be ascribed. By them it was separated from common sense, and made the proper employment of speculative idlers. Men bred up among books, and seeing nature only by reflection, could do little, except hunt after perplexity and confusion. The public, therefore, with reason rejected learning, when thus rendered barren, though voluminous; for we may be assured, that the generality of mankind never lose a passion for letters, while they continue to be either amusing or useful.

It was such writers as these, that rendered learning unfit for uniting and strengthening civil society, or for

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promoting the views of ambition. True philosophy had kept the Grecian states cemented into one effective body, more than any law for that purpose; and the Etrurian philosophy, which prevailed in the first ages of Rome, inspired those patriot virtues which paved the way to universal empire. But by the labours of commentators, when philosophy became abstruse, or triflingly minute, when doubt was presented instead of knowledge, when the orator was taught to charm the multitude with the music of his periods, and pronounced a declamation that might be sung as well as spoken, and often upon subjects wholly fictitious; in such circumstances, learning was entirely unsuited to all the purposes of government, or the designs of the ambitious. As long as the sciences could influence the state, and its politics were strengthened by them, so long did the community give them countenance and protection. But the wiser part of mankind would not be imposed upon by unintelligible jargon, nor, like the knight in Pantagruel, swallow a chimera for a breakfast, though even cooked by Aristotle. As the philosopher grew useless in the state, he also became contemptible. In the times of Lucian, he was chiefly remarkable for his avarice, his impudence, and his beard.

Under the auspicious influence of genius, arts and sciences grew up together, and mutually illustrated each other. But when once pedants became lawgivers, the sciences began to want grace, and the polite arts solidity; these grew crabbed and sour, those meretricious and gaudy; the philosopher became disgustingly precise, and the poet, ever straining after grace, caught only finery.

These men also contributed to obstruct the progress of wisdom, by addicting their readers to one particular sect, or some favourite science. They generally carried on a

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petty traffic in some little creek: within that they busily plied about, and drove an insignificant trade; but never ventured out into the great ocean of knowledge, nor went beyond the bounds that chance, conceit, or laziness, had first prescribed their inquiries. Their disciples, instead of aiming at being originals themselves, became imitators of that merit alone which was constantly proposed for their admiration. In exercises of this kind, the most stupid are generally most successful; for there is not in nature a more imitative animal than a dunce.

Hence ancient learning may be distinguished into three periods. Its commencement, or the age of poets; its maturity, or the age of philosophers; and its decline, or the age of critics. In the poetical age commentators were very few, but might have in some respects been useful. In its philosophical, their assistance must necessarily become obnoxious; yet, as if the nearer we approached perfection the more we stood in need of their directions, in this period they began to grow numerous. But when polite learning was no more, then it was those literary lawgivers made the most formidable appearance. *Corruptissima republica, plurimæ leges.* TACIT.

But let us take a more distinct view of those ages of ignorance in which false refinement had involved mankind, and see how far they resemble our own.

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CHAPTER III.

A View of the Obscure Ages.

WHATEVER the skill of any country may be in the sciences, it is from its excellence in polite learning alone, that it must expect a character from posterity. The poet and the historian are they who diffuse a lustre upon the age, and the philosopher scarcely acquires any applause, unless his character be introduced to the vulgar by their mediation.

The obscure ages, which succeeded the decline of the Roman empire, are a striking instance of the truth of this assertion. Whatever period of those ill-fated times we happen to turn to, we shall perceive more skill in the sciences among the professors of them, more abstruse and deeper inquiry into every philosophical subject, and a greater show of subtlety and close reasoning, than in the most enlightened ages of all antiquity. But their writings were mere speculative amusements, and all their researches exhausted upon trifles. Unskilled in the arts of adorning their knowledge, or adapting it to common sense, their voluminous productions rest peacefully in our libraries, or at best are inquired after from motives of curiosity, not by the scholar, but the virtuoso.

I am not insensible, that several late French historians have exhibited the obscure ages in a very different light.

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They have represented them as utterly ignorant both of arts and sciences, buried in the profoundest darkness, or only illuminated with a feeble gleam, which, like an expiring taper, rose and sunk by intervals. Such assertions, however, though they serve to help out the declaimer, should be cautiously admitted by the historian. For instance, the tenth century is particularly distinguished by posterity with the appellation of obscure. Yet, even in this, the reader's memory may possibly suggest the names of some, whose works, still preserved, discover a most extensive erudition, though rendered almost useless by affectation and obscurity. A few of their names and writings may be mentioned, which will serve at once to confirm what I assert, and give the reader an idea of what kind of learning an age declining into obscurity chiefly chooses to cultivate.

About the tenth century flourished Leo the philosopher. We have seven volumes folio of his collections of laws, published at Paris, 1647. He wrote upon the art military, and understood also astronomy and judicial astrology. He was seven times more voluminous than Plato.

Solomon, the German, wrote a most elegant dictionary of the Latin tongue, still preserved in the university of Louvain; Pantaleon, in the lives of his illustrious countrymen, speaks of it in the warmest strains of rapture. Dictionary writing was at that time much in fashion.

Constantine Porphyrogeneta was a man universally skilled in the sciences. His tracts on the administration of an empire, on tactics, and on laws, were published some years since at Leyden. His court, for he was emperor of the East, was resorted to by the learned from all parts of the world.

Luitprandus was a most voluminous historian, and par-

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ticularly famous for the history of his own times. The compliments paid him as a writer are said to exceed even his own voluminous productions. I cannot pass over one of a later date made him by a German divine. *Luitprandus nunquam Luitprando dissimilis.*

Alfric composed several grammars and dictionaries still preserved among the curious.

Pope Sylvester the Second wrote a treatise on the sphere, on arithmetic and geometry, published some years since at Paris.

Michael Psellus lived in this age, whose books in the sciences, I will not scruple to assert, contain more learning than those of any one of the earlier ages. His erudition was indeed amazing; and he was as voluminous as he was learned. The character given him by Allatius has, perhaps, more truth in it than will be granted by those who have seen none of his productions. There was, says he, no science with which he was unacquainted, none which he did not write something upon, and none which he did not leave better than he found it. To mention his works would be endless. His commentaries on Aristotle alone amount to three folios.

Bertholdus Teutonicus, a very voluminous historian, was a politician, and wrote against the government under which he lived: but most of his writings, though not all, are lost.

Constantius Afer was a philosopher and physician. We have remaining but two volumes folio of his philological performances. However, the historian who prefixes the life of the author to his works, says, that he wrote many more, as he kept on writing during the course of a long life.

Lambertus published a universal history about this

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time, which has been printed at Frankfort in folio. An universal history in one folio! If he had consulted with his bookseller, he would have spun it out to ten at least; but Lambertus might have had too much modesty.

By this time the reader perceives the spirit of learning which at that time prevailed. The ignorance of the age was not owing to a dislike of knowledge, but a false standard of taste was erected, and a wrong direction given to philosophical inquiry. It was the fashion of the day to write dictionaries, commentaries, and compilations, and to evaporate in a folio the spirit that could scarcely have sufficed for an epigram. The most barbarous times had men of learning, if commentators, compilers, polemic divines, and intricate metaphysicians, deserved the title.

I have mentioned but a very inconsiderable number of the writers in this age of obscurity. The multiplicity of their publications will at least equal those of any similar period of the most polite antiquity. As, therefore, the writers of those times are almost entirely forgotten, we may infer, that the number of publications alone will never secure any age whatsoever from oblivion. Nor can printing, contrary to what Mr Baumelle has remarked, prevent literary decline for the future, since it only increases the number of books, without advancing their intrinsic merit.

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CHAPTER IV.

Of the Present State of Polite Learning in Italy.

From ancient we are now come to modern times, and, in running over Europe, we shall find, that wherever learning has been cultivated, it has flourished by the same advantages as in Greece and Rome; and that, wherever it has declined, it sinks by the same causes of decay.

Dante, the poet of Italy, who wrote in the thirteenth century, was the first who attempted to bring learning from the cloister into the community, and paint human nature in a language adapted to modern manners. He addressed a barbarous people in a method suited to their apprehensions; united purgatory and the river Styx, St Peter and Virgil, Heaven and Hell together, and shows a strange mixture of good sense and absurdity. The truth is, he owes most of his reputation to the obscurity of the times in which he lived. As in the land of Benin a man may pass for a prodigy of parts who can read, so in an age of barbarity, a small degree of excellence ensures success. But it was great merit in him to have lifted up the standard of nature, in spite of all the opposition and the persecution he received from contemporary criticism. To this standard every succeeding genius resorted; the germ of every art and science began to unfold; and to imitate na-

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ture was found to be the surest way of imitating antiquity. In a century or two after, modern Italy might justly boast of rivalling ancient Rome; equal in some branches of polite learning, and not far surpassed in others.

They soon, however, fell from emulating the wonders of antiquity into simple admiration. As if the word had been given when Vida and Tasso wrote on the arts of poetry, the whole swarm of critics was up. The Speronis of the age attempted to be awkwardly merry; and the Virtuosi and the Nascotti sat upon the merits of every contemporary performance. After the age of Clement VII. the Italians seemed to think that there was more merit in praising or censuring well, than in writing well; almost every subsequent performance since their time, being designed rather to show the excellence of the critic's taste than his genius. One or two poets, indeed, seem at present born to redeem the honour of their country. Metastasio has restored nature in all her simplicity, and Maffei is the first that has introduced a tragedy among his countrymen without a love-plot. Perhaps the Samson of Milton, and the Athalia of Racine, might have been his guides in such an attempt. But two poets in an age are not sufficient to revive the splendour of decaying genius; nor should we consider them as the standard by which to characterize a nation. Our measures of literary reputation must be taken rather from that numerous class of men, who, placed above the vulgar, are yet beneath the great, and who confer fame on others without receiving any portion of it themselves.

In Italy, then, we shall no where find a stronger passion for the arts of taste, yet no country making more feeble efforts to promote either. The Virtuosi and Filosofi seem to have divided the Encyclopedia between each other.

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Both inviolably attached to their respective pursuits; and, from an opposition of character, each holding the other in the most sovereign contempt. The Virtuosi, professed critics of beauty in the works of art, judge of medals by the smell, and pictures by feeling; in statuary, hang over a fragment with the most ardent gaze of admiration: though wanting the head and the other extremities, if dug from a ruin, the *Torse* becomes inestimable. An unintelligible monument of Etruscan barbarity cannot be sufficiently prized; and any thing from Herculaneum excites rapture. When the intellectual taste is thus decayed, its relishes become false, and, like that of sense, nothing will satisfy but what is best suited to feed the disease.

Poetry is no longer among them an imitation of what we see, but of what a visionary might wish. The zephyr breathes the most exquisite perfume, the trees wear eternal verdure; fawns, and dryads, and hamadryads, stand ready to fan the sultry shepherdess, who has forgot indeed the prettinesses with which Guarini's shepherdesses have been reproached, but is so simple and innocent as often to have no meaning. Happy country, where the pastoral age begins to revive! where the wits even of Rome, are united into a rural group of nymphs and swains, under the appellation of modern Arcadians: where in the midst of porticos, processions, and cavalcades, abbés turned shepherds, and shepherdesses without sheep indulge their innocent *divertimenti*.

The Filosofi are entirely different from the former. As those pretend to have got their knowledge from conversing with the living and polite, so these boast of having theirs from books and study. Bred up all their lives in colleges, they have there learned to think in track, servilely to follow the leader of their sect, and only to adopt such

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opinions as their universities, or the inquisition, are pleased to allow. By these means, they are behind the rest of Europe in several modern improvements; afraid to think for themselves; and their universities seldom admit opinions as true, till universally received among the rest of mankind. In short, were I to personize my ideas of learning in this country, I would represent it in the tawdry habits of the stage, or else in the more homely guise of bearded school-philosophy.

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CHAPTER V.

Of Polite Learning in Germany.

If we examine the state of learning in Germany, we shall find that the Germans early discovered a passion for polite literature; but unhappily, like conquerors, who, invading the dominions of others, leave their own to desolation, instead of studying the German tongue, they continue to write in Latin. Thus, while they cultivated an obsolete language, and vainly laboured to apply it to modern manners, they neglected their own.

At the same time also, they began at the wrong end, I mean by being commentators; and though they have given many instances of their industry, they have scarcely afforded any of genius. If criticism could have improved the taste of a people, the Germans would have been the most polite nation alive. We shall no where behold the learned wear a more important appearance than here; no where more dignified with professorships, or dressed out in the fopperies of scholastic finery. However, they seem to earn all the honours of this kind which they enjoy. Their assiduity is unparalleled; and did they employ half those hours on study which they bestow on reading, we might be induced to pity as well as praise their painful pre-eminence. But guilty of a fault too common to great

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readers, they write through volumes, while they do not think through a page. Never fatigued themselves, they think the reader can never be weary; so they drone on, saying all that can be said on the subject, not selecting what may be advanced to the purpose. Were angels to write books, they never would write folios.

But let the Germans have their due; if they are dull, no nation alive assumes a more laudable solemnity, or better understands all the decorums of stupidity. Let the discourse of a professor run on never so heavily, it cannot be irksome to his dozing pupils, who frequently lend him sympathetic nods of approbation. I have sometimes attended their disputes at gradation. On this occasion they often dispense with their gravity, and seem really all alive. The disputes are managed between the followers of Cartesius (whose exploded system they continue to call the new philosophy) and those of Aristotle. Though both parties are in the wrong, they argue with an obstinacy worthy the cause of truth; Nego, Probo, and Distinguo, grow loud; the disputants become warm, the moderator cannot be heard, the audience take part in the debate, till at last the whole hall buzzes with sophistry and error.

There are, it is true, several societies in this country, which are chiefly calculated to promote knowledge. His late majesty, as elector of Hanover, has established one at Gottingen, at an expense of not less than a hundred thousand pounds. This university has already pickled monsters, and dissected live puppies without number. Their transactions have been published in the learned world at proper intervals since their institution; and will, it is hoped, one day give them just reputation. But had the fourth part of the immense sum above mentioned been given in proper rewards to genius, in some neighbouring

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countries, it would have rendered the name of the donor immortal, and added to the real interests of society.

Yet it ought to be observed, that, of late, learning has been patronized here by a prince, who, in the humblest station, would have been the first of mankind. The society established by the king of Prussia, at Berlin, is one of the finest literary institutions that any age or nation has produced. This academy comprehends all the sciences under four different classes; and although the object of each is different, and admits of being separately treated, yet these classes mutually influence the progress of each other, and concur in the same general design. Experimental philosophy, mathematics, metaphysics, and polite literature, are here carried on together. The members are not collected from among the students of some obscure seminary, or the wits of a metropolis, but chosen from all the literati of Europe, supported by the bounty, and ornamented by the productions of their royal founder. We can easily discern, how much such an institution excels any other now subsisting. One fundamental error among societies of this kind, is their addicting themselves to one branch of science, or some particular part of polite learning. Thus, in Germany, there are no where so many establishments of this nature; but as they generally profess the promotion of natural or medical knowledge, he who reads their Acta will only find an obscure farago of experiment, most frequently terminated by no resulting phenomena. To make experiments, is, I own, the only way to promote natural knowledge; but to treasure up every unsuccessful inquiry into nature, or to communicate every experiment without conclusion, is not to promote science, but oppress it. Had the members of these societies enlarged their plans, and taken in art as well as science, one part of

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knowledge would have repressed any faulty luxuriance in the other, and all would have mutually assisted each other's promotion. Besides, the society which, with a contempt of all collateral assistance, admits of members skilled in one science only, whatever their diligence or labour may be, will lose much time in the discovery of such truths as are well known already to the learned in a different line; consequently, their progress must be slow in gaining a proper eminence from which to view their subject, and their strength will be exhausted in attaining the station whence they should have set out. With regard to the Royal Society of London, the greatest, and perhaps the oldest institution of the kind, had it widened the basis of its institution, though they might not have propagated more discoveries, they would probably have delivered them in a more pleasing and compendious form. They would have been free from the contempt of the ill-natured, and the raillery of the wit, for which, even candour must allow, there is but too much foundation. But the Berlin academy is subject to none of all these inconveniences, but every one of its individuals is in a capacity of deriving more from the common stock than he contributes to it, while each academician serves as a check upon the rest of his fellows.

Yet, very probably, even this fine institution will soon decay. As it rose, so it will decline with its great encourager. The society, if I may so speak, is artificially supported. The introduction of foreigners of learning was right; but in adopting a foreign language also, I mean the French, in which all the transactions are to be published, and questions debated, in this there was an error. As I have already hinted, the language of the natives of every country should be also the language of its polite learning. To figure in polite learning, every country should make

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their own language from their own manners; nor will they ever succeed by introducing that of another, which has been formed from manners which are different. Besides, an academy composed of foreigners must still be recruited from abroad, unless all the natives of the country to which it belongs, are in a capacity of becoming candidates for its honours or rewards. While France therefore continues to supply Berlin, polite learning will flourish; but when royal favour is withdrawn, learning will return to its natural country.

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CHAPTER VI.

Of Polite Learning in Holland, and some other Countries of Europe.

HOLLAND, at first view, appears to have some pretensions to polite learning. It may be regarded as the great emporium, not less of literature than of every other commodity. Here, though destitute of what may be properly called a language of their own, all the languages are understood, cultivated, and spoken. All useful inventions in arts, and new discoveries in science, are published here almost as soon as at the places which first produced them. Its individuals have the same faults, however, with the Germans, of making more use of their memory than their judgment. The chief employment of their literati is to criticise, or answer, the new performances which appear elsewhere.

A dearth of wit in France or England naturally produces a scarcity in Holland. What Ovid says of Echo, may be applied here, *Nec loqui prius ipsa didicit nec reticere loquenti.* They wait till something new comes out from others; examine its merits, and reject it, or make it reverberate through the rest of Europe.

After all, I know not whether they should be allowed any national character for polite learning. All their taste is derived to them from neighbouring nations, and that in a language not their own. They somewhat resemble their

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brokers, who trade for immense sums without having any capital.

The other countries of Europe may be considered as immersed in ignorance, or making but feeble efforts to rise. Spain has long fallen from amazing Europe with her wit, to amusing them with the greatness of her catholic credulity. Rome considers her as the most favourite of all her children, and school divinity still reigns there in triumph. In spite of all attempts of the Marquis D'Ensanada, who saw with regret the barbarity of his countrymen, and bravely offered to oppose it by introducing new systems of learning, and suppressing the seminaries of monastic ignorance; in spite of the ingenuity of Padré Feio, whose book of vulgar errors so finely exposes the monkish stupidity of the times,—the religious have prevailed. Ensanada has been banished, and now lives in exile. Feio has incurred the hatred and contempt of every bigot whose errors he has attempted to oppose, and feels no doubt the unremitting displeasure of the priesthood. Persecution is a tribute the great must ever pay for pre-eminence.

It is a little extraordinary, however, how Spain, whose genius is naturally fine, should be so much behind the rest of Europe in this particular; or why school divinity should hold its ground there for nearly six hundred years. The reason must be, that philosophical opinions, which are otherwise transient, acquire stability in proportion as they are connected with the laws of the country; and philosophy and law have no where been so closely united as here.

Sweden has of late made some attempts in polite learning in its own language. Count Tessin's instructions to the prince, his pupil, are no bad beginning. If the Muses can fix their residence so far northward, perhaps no country bids so fair for their reception. They have, I am told, a

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language rude but energetic; if so, it will bear a polish. They have also a jealous sense of liberty, and that strength of thinking peculiar to nothern climates, without its attendant ferocity. They will certainly in time produce somewhat great, if their intestine divisions do not unhappily prevent them.

The history of polite learning in Denmark may be comprised in the life of one single man: it rose and fell with the late famous Baron Holberg. This was, perhaps, one of the most extraordinary personages that has done honour to the present century. His being the son of a private sentinel did not abate the ardour of his ambition, for he learned to read though without a master. Upon the death of his father, being left entirely destitute, he was involved in all that distress which is common among the poor, and of which the great have scarcely any idea. However, though only a boy of nine years old, he still persisted in pursuing his studies, travelled about from school to school, and begged his learning and his bread. When at the age of seventeen, instead of applying himself to any of the lower occupations, which seem best adapted to such circumstances, he was resolved to travel for improvement from Norway, the place of his birth, to Copenhagen the capital city of Denmark. He lived there by teaching French, at the same time avoiding no opportunity of improvement that his scanty funds could permit. But his ambition was not to be restrained, or his thirst of knowledge satisfied, until he had seen the world. Without money, recommendations, or friends, he undertook to set out upon his travels, and make the tour of Europe on foot. A good voice, and a trifling skill in music, were the only finances he had to support an undertaking so extensive; so he travelled by day, and at night sung at the doors of peasants' houses to get himself a lodging. In this

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manner, while yet very young, Holberg passed through France, Germany, and Holland; and coming over to England, took up his residence for two years in the university of Oxford. Here he subsisted by teaching French and music, and wrote his universal history, his earliest, but worst performance. Furnished with all the learning of Europe, he at last thought proper to return to Copenhagen, where his ingenious productions quickly gained him that favour he deserved. He composed not less than eighteen comedies. Those in his own language are said to excel, and those which are translated into French have peculiar merit. He was honoured with nobility, and enriched by the bounty of the king; so that a life begun in contempt and penury, ended in opulence and esteem.

Thus we see in what a low state polite learning is in the countries I have mentioned; either past its prime, or not yet arrived at maturity. And though the sketch I have drawn be general, yet it was for the most part taken on the spot. I am sensible, however, of the impropriety of national reflection; and did not truth bias me more than inclination in this particular, I should, instead of the account already given, have presented the reader with a panegyric on many of the individuals of every country, whose merits deserve the warmest strains of praise. Apostolo Zeno, Algarotti, Goldoni, Muratori, and Stay, in Italy; Haller, Klopstock, and Rabner, in Germany; Muschenbroek, and Gaubius, in Holland; all deserve the highest applause. Men like these, united by one bond, pursuing one design, spend their labour and their lives in making their fellow-creatures happy, and in repairing the breaches caused by ambition. In this light, the meanest philosopher, though all his possessions are his lamp or his cell, is more truly valuable than he whose name echoes to the shout of the

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million, and who stands in all the glare of admiration. In this light, though poverty and contemptuous neglect are all the wages of his good-will from mankind, yet the rectitude of his intention is an ample recompense; and self-applause for the present, and the alluring prospect of fame for futurity, reward his labours. The perspective of life brightens upon us, when terminated by an object so charming. Every intermediate image of want, banishment, or sorrow, receives a lustre from its distant influence. With this in view, the patriot, philosopher, and poet, have often looked with calmness on disgrace and famine, and rested on their straw with cheerful serenity. Even the last terrors of departing nature abate of their severity, and look kindly on him who considers his sufferings as a passport to immortality, and lays his sorrows on the bed of fame.

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CHAPTER VII.

Of Polite Learning in France.

We have hitherto seen, that wherever the poet was permitted to begin by improving his native language, polite learning flourished; but where the critic undertook the same task, it has never risen to any degree of perfection. Let us now examine the merits of modern learning in France and England; where, though it may be on the decline, yet it is still capable of retrieving much of its former splendour. In other places learning has not yet been planted, or has suffered a total decay. To attempt amendment there, would be only like the application of remedies to an insensible or a mortified part; but here there is still life, and there is hope. And indeed the French themselves are so far from giving into any despondence of this kind, that, on the contrary, they admire the progress they are daily making in every science. That levity, for which we are apt to despise this nation, is probably the principal source of their happiness. An agreeable oblivion of past pleasures, a freedom from solicitude about future ones, and a poignant zest of every present enjoyment, if they be not philosophy, are at least excellent substitutes. By this they are taught to regard the period in which they live with admiration. The present manners, and the pre-

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sent conversation, surpass all that preceded. A similar enthusiasm as strongly tinctures their learning and their taste. While we, with a despondence characteristic of our nature, are for removing back British excellence to the reign of Queen Elizabeth, our more happy rivals of the continent cry up the writers of the present times with rapture, and regard the age of Louis XV. as the true Augustan age of France.

The truth is, their present writers have not fallen so far short of the merits of their ancestors as ours have done. That self-sufficiency now mentioned, may have been of service to them in this particular. By fancying themselves superiour to their ancestors, they have been encouraged to enter the lists with confidence; and by not being dazzled at the splendour of another's reputation, have sometimes had sagacity to mark out an unbeaten path to fame for themselves.

Other causes also may be assigned, that their second growth of genius is still more vigorous than ours. Their encouragements to merit are more skilfully directed, the link of patronage and learning still continues unbroken. The French nobility have certainly a most pleasing way of satisfying the vanity of an author, without indulging his avarice. A man of literary merit is sure of being caressed by the great, though seldom enriched. His pension from the crown just supplies half a competence, and the sale of his labours makes some small addition to his circumstances. Thus the author leads a life of splendid poverty, and seldom becomes wealthy or indolent enough to discontinue an exertion of those abilities by which he rose. With the English it is different. Our writers of rising merit are generally neglected, while the few of an established reputation are overpaid by luxurious affluence.

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The young encounter every hardship which generally attends upon aspiring indigence; the old enjoy the vulgar, and perhaps the more prudent, satisfaction, of putting riches in competition with fame. Those are often seen to spend their youth in want and obscurity; these are sometimes found to lead an old age of indolence and avarice. But such treatment must naturally be expected from Englishmen, whose national character it is to be slow and cautious in making friends, but violent in friendships once contracted. The English nobility, in short, are often known to give greater rewards to genius than the French, who, however, are much more judicious in the application of their empty favours.

The fair sex in France have also not a little contributed to prevent the decline of taste and literature, by expecting such qualifications in their admirers. A man of fashion at Paris, however contemptible we may think him here, must be acquainted with the reigning modes of philosophy as well as of dress, to be able to entertain his mistress agreeably. The sprightly pedants are not to be caught by dumb show, by the squeeze of the hand, or the ogling of a broad eye; but must be pursued at once through all the labyrinths of the Newtonian system, or the metaphysics of Locke. I have seen as bright a circle of beauty at the chemical lectures of Rouelle as gracing the court of Versailles. And indeed wisdom never appears so charming as when graced and protected by beauty.

To these advantages may be added, the reception of their language in the different courts of Europe. An author who excels is sure of having all the polite for admirers, and is encouraged to write by the pleasing expectation of universal fame. Add to this, that those countries who can make nothing good from their own language,

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have lately begun to write in this, some of whose productions contribute to support the present literary reputation of France.

There are, therefore, many among the French who do honour to the present age, and whose writings will be transmitted to posterity with an ample share of fame; some of the most celebrated are as follow:—

Voltaire, whose voluminous, yet spirited productions are too well known to require an eulogy. Does he not resemble the champion mentioned by Xenophon, of great reputation in all the gymnastic exercises united, but inferior to each champion singly, who excels only in one?

Montesquieu, a name equally deserving fame with the former. The Spirit of Laws is an instance how much genius is able to lead learning. His system has been adopted by the literati; and yet, is it not possible for opinions equally plausible to be formed upon opposite principles, if a genius like his could be found to attempt such an undertaking? He seems more a poet than a philosopher.

Rousseau of Geneva, a professed man-hater, or more properly speaking, a philosopher enraged with one half of mankind, because they unavoidably make the other half unhappy. Such sentiments are generally the result of much good-nature and little experience.

Piron, an author possessed of as much wit as any man alive, yet with as little prudence to turn it to his own advantage. A comedy of his, called *La Métromanie*, is the best theatrical production that has appeared of late in Europe. But I know not whether I should most commend his genius or censure his obscenity. His *Ode à Priape* has justly excluded him from a place in the academy of Belles-Lettres. However, the good-natured Mon-

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tesquieu, by his interest, procured the starving bard a trifling pension. His own epitaph was all the revenge he took upon the academy for being repulsed.

> Ci-gît Piron, qui ne fut jamais rien,
> Pas même académicien.

Crebillon, junior, a writer of real merit, but guilty of the same indelicate faults with the former. Wit employed in dressing up obscenity is like the art used in painting a corpse; it may be thus rendered tolerable to one sense, but fails not quickly to offend some other.

Gresset is agreeable and easy. His comedy called the *Méchant*, and a humorous poem entitled *Ververt*, have original merit. He was bred a Jesuit; but his wit procured his dismission from the society. This last work particularly could expect no pardon from the Convent, being a satire against nunneries!

D'Alembert has united an extensive skill in scientifical learning with the most refined taste for the polite arts. His excellence in both has procured him a seat in each academy.

Diderot is an elegant writer and subtle reasoner. He is the supposed author of the famous Thesis which the abbé Prade sustained before the doctors of the Sorbonne. It was levelled against Christianity, and the Sorbonne too hastily gave it their sanction. They perceived its purport, however, when it was too late. The college was brought into some contempt, and the abbé obliged to take refuge at the court of Berlin.

The Marquis D'Argens attempts to add the character of a philosopher to the vices of a debauchee.

The catalogue might be increased with several other authors of merit, such as Marivaux, Lefranc, Saint-Foix,

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Destouches, and Modonville; but let it suffice to say, that by these the character of the present age is tolerably supported. Though their poets seldom rise to fine enthusiasm, they never sink into absurdity; though they fail to astonish, they are generally possessed of talents to please.

The age of Louis XIV. notwithstanding these respectable names, is still vastly superiour. For beside the general tendency of critical corruption, which shall be spoken of by and by, there are other symptoms which indicate a decline. There is, for instance, a fondness of scepticism, which runs through the works of some of their most applauded writers, and which the numerous class of their imitators have contributed to diffuse. Nothing can be a more certain sign that genius is in the wane, than its being obliged to fly to paradox for support, and attempting to be erroneously agreeable. A man who, with all the impotence of wit, and all the eager desires of infidelity, writes against the religion of his country, may raise doubts, but will never give conviction; all he can do is to render society less happy than he found it. It was a good manner which the father of the late poet, Saint-Foix, took to reclaim his son from this juvenile error. The young poet had shut himself up for some time in his study; and his father, willing to know what had engaged his attention so closely, upon entering found him busied in drawing up a new system of religion, and endeavouring to show the absurdity of that already established. The old man knew by experience, that it was useless to endeavour to convince a vain young man by right reason, so only desired his company up stairs. When come into the father's apartment, he takes his son by the hand, and drawing back a curtain at one end of the room, discovered a crucifix exquisitely painted. «My son,» says he, «you desire to

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change the religion of your country,—behold the fate of a reformer.» The truth is, vanity is more apt to misguide men than false reasoning. As some would rather be conspicuous in a mob than unnoticed even in a privy-council, so others choose rather to be foremost in the retinue of error, than follow in the train of truth. What influence the conduct of such writers may have on the morals of a people, is not my business here to determine. Certain I am, that it has a manifest tendency to subvert the literary merits of the country in view. The change of religion in every nation has hitherto produced barbarism and ignorance; and such will be probably its consequences in every future period. For when the laws and opinions of society are made to clash, harmony is dissolved, and all the parts of peace unavoidably crushed in the encounter.

The writers of this country have also of late fallen into a method of considering every part of art and science as arising from simple principles. The success of Montesquieu, and one or two more, has induced all the subordinate ranks of genius into vicious imitation. To this end they turn to our view that side of the subject which contributes to support their hypothesis, while the objections are generally passed over in silence. Thus a universal system rises from a partial representation of the question, a whole is concluded from a part, a book appears entirely new, and the fancy-built fabric is styled for a short time very ingenious. In this manner, we have seen of late almost every subject in morals, natural history, politics, economy, and commerce, treated. Subjects naturally proceeding on many principles, and some even opposite to each other, are all taught to proceed along the line of systematic simplicity, and continue, like other agreeable falsehoods, extremely pleasing till they are detected.

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I must still add another fault, of a nature somewhat similar to the former. As those above mentioned are for contracting a single science into system, so those I am going to speak of are for drawing up a system of all the sciences united. Such undertakings as these are carried on by different writers cemented into one body, and concurring in the same design, by the mediation of a bookseller. From these inauspicious combinations proceed those monsters of learning the Trevoux, Encyclopédies, and Bibliothéques of the age. In making these, men of every rank in literature are employed, wits and dunces contribute their share, and Diderot, as well as Desmaretz, are candidates for oblivion. The genius of the first supplies the gale of favour, and the latter adds the useful ballast of stupidity. By such means, the enormous mass heavily makes its way among the public, and, to borrow a bookseller's phrase, the whole impression moves off. These great collections of learning may serve to make us inwardly repine at our own ignorance; may serve, when gilt and lettered, to adorn the lower shelves of a regular library; but woe to the reader, who, not daunted at the immense distance between one great pasteboard and the other, opens the volume, and explores his way through a region so extensive, but barren of entertainment. No unexpected landscape there to delight the imagination; no diversity of prospect to cheat the painful journey. He sees the wide extended desert lie before him: what is past, only increases his terror of what is to come. His course is not half finished; he looks behind him with affright, and forward with despair. Perseverance is at last overcome, and a night of oblivion lends its friendly aid to terminate the perplexity.

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CHAPTER VIII.

Of Learning in Great Britain.

To acquire a character for learning among the English at present, it is necessary to know much more than is either important or useful. It seems the spirit of the times for men here to exhaust their natural sagacity in exploring the intricacies of another man's thought, and thus never to have leisure to think for themselves. Others have carried on learning from that stage, where the good sense of our ancestors have thought it too minute or too speculative to instruct or amuse. By the industry of such, the sciences, which in themselves are easy of access, affright the learner with the severity of their appearance. He sees them surrounded with speculation and subtlety, placed there by their professors as if with a view of deterring his approach. Hence it happens, that the generality of readers fly from the scholar to the compiler, who offers them a more safe and speedy conveyance.

From this fault also arises that mutual contempt between the scholar and the man of the world, of which every day's experience furnishes instances.

The man of taste, however, stands neutral in this controversy. He seems placed in a middle station, between the world and the cell, between learning and common

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sense. He teaches the vulgar on what part of a character to lay the emphasis of praise, and the scholar where to point his application so as to deserve it. By his means, even the philosopher acquires popular applause, and all that are truly great the admiration of posterity. By means of polite learning alone, the patriot and the hero, the man who praises virtue, and he who practises it, who fights successfully for his country, or who dies in its defence, becomes immortal. But this taste now seems cultivated with less ardour than formerly, and consequently the public must one day expect to see the advantages arising from it, and the exquisite pleasures it affords our leisure, entirely annihilated. For if, as it should seem, the rewards of genius are improperly directed; if those who are capable of supporting the honour of the times by their writings prefer opulence to fame; if the stage should be shut to writers of merit, and open only to interest or intrigue;—if such should happen to be the vile complexion of the times (and that it is nearly so we shall shortly see), the very virtue of the age will be forgotten by posterity, and nothing remembered, except our filling a chasm in the registers of time, or having served to continue the species.

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CHAPTER IX.

Of rewarding Genius in England.

THERE is nothing authors are more apt to lament than want of encouragement from the age. Whatever their differences in other respects, they are all ready to unite in this complaint, and each indirectly offers himself as an instance of the truth of his assertion.

The beneficed divine, whose wants are only imaginary, expostulates as bitterly as the poorest author. Should interest or good fortune advance the divine to a bishopric, or the poor son of Parnassus into that place which the other has resigned, both are authors no longer; the one goes to prayers once a-day, kneels upon cushions of velvet, and thanks gracious Heaven for having made the circumstances of all mankind so extremely happy; the other battens on all the delicacies of life, enjoys his wife and his easy chair, and sometimes, for the sake of conversation, deplores the luxury of these degenerate days.

All encouragements to merit are therefore misapplied, which make the author too rich to continue his profession. There can be nothing more just than the old observation, that authors, like running horses, should be fed but not fattened. If we would continue them in our service, we should reward them with a little money and a great deal

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of praise, still keeping their avarice subservient to their ambition. Not that I think a writer incapable of filling an employment with dignity: I would only insinuate, that when made a bishop or statesman, he will continue to please us as a writer no longer; as, to resume a former allusion, the running horse, when fattened, will still be fit for very useful purposes, though unqualified for a courser.

No nation gives greater encouragements to learning than we do; yet, at the same time, none are so injudicious in the application. We seem to confer them with the same view that statesmen have been known to grant employments at court, rather as bribes to silence than incentives to emulation.

Upon this principle, all our magnificent endowments of colleges are erroneous; and at best more frequently enrich the prudent than reward the ingenious. A lad whose passions are not strong enough in youth to mislead him from that path of science which his tutors, and not his inclinations, have chalked out, by four or five years' perseverance may probably obtain every advantage and honour his college can bestow. I forget whether the simile has been used before, but I would compare the man, whose youth has been thus passed in the tranquillity of dispassionate prudence, to liquors which never ferment, and consequently continue always muddy. Passions may raise a commotion in the youthful breast, but they disturb only to refine it. However this be, mean talents are often rewarded in colleges with an easy subsistence. The candidates for preferments of this kind often regard their admission as a patent for future indolence; so that a life begun in studious labour is often continued in luxurious indolence.

Among the universities abroad, I have ever observed their riches and their learning in a reciprocal proportion,

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their stupidity and pride increasing with their opulence. Happening once, in conversation with Gaubius of Leyden, to mention the college of Edinburgh, he began by complaining, that all the English students which formerly came to his university now went entirely there; and the fact surprised him more, as Leyden was now as well as ever furnished with masters excellent in their respective professions. He concluded by asking, if the professors of Edinburgh were rich? I replied, that the salary of a professor there seldom amounted to more than thirty pounds a-year. Poor men, says he, I heartily wish they were better provided for; until they become rich, we can have no expectation of English students at Leyden.

Premiums also, proposed for literary excellence, when given as encouragements to boys, may be useful; but when designed as rewards to men, are certainly misapplied. We have seldom seen a performance of any great merit, in consequence of rewards proposed in this manner. Who has ever observed a writer of any eminence a candidate in so precarious a contest? The man who knows the real value of his own genius, will no more venture it upon an uncertainty, than he who knows the true use of a guinea will stake it with a sharper.

Every encouragement given to stupidity, when known to be such, is also a negative insult upon genius. This appears in nothing more evident than the undistinguished success of those who solicit subscriptions. When first brought into fashion, subscriptions were conferred upon the ingenious alone, or those who were reputed such. But at present, we see them made a resource of indigence, and requested, not as rewards of merit, but as a relief of distress. If tradesmen happen to want skill in conducting their own business, yet they are able to write a book: if

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mechanics want money, or ladies shame, they write books and solicit subscriptions. Scarcely a morning passes, that proposals of this nature are not thrust into the half-opening doors of the rich, with, perhaps, a paltry petition, showing the author's wants, but not his merits. I would not willingly prevent that pity which is due to indigence; but while the streams of liberality are thus diffused, they must, in the end, become proportionably shallow.

What then are the proper encouragements of genius? I answer, subsistence and respect; for these are rewards congenial to its nature. Every animal has an aliment peculiarly suited to its constitution. The heavy ox seeks nourishment from earth; the light cameleon has been supposed to exist on air; a sparer diet even than this will satisfy the man of true genius, for he makes a luxurious banquet upon empty applause. It is this alone which has inspired all that ever was truly great and noble among us. It is, as Cicero finely calls it, the echo of virtue. Avarice is the passion of inferior natures; money the pay of the common herd. The author who draws his quill merely to take a purse, no more deserves success than he who presents a pistol.

When the link between patronage and learning was entire, then all who deserved fame were in a capacity of attaining it. When the great Somers was at the helm, patronage was fashionable among our nobility. The middle ranks of mankind, who generally imitate the great, then followed their example, and applauded from fashion if not from feeling. I have heard an old poet[1] of that glorious age say, that a dinner with his lordship has procured him invitations for the whole week following; that an airing in

[1] Dr. Young.

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his patron's chariot has supplied him with a citizen's coach on every future occasion. For who would not be proud to entertain a man who kept so much good company?

But this link now seems entirely broken. Since the days of a certain prime minister of inglorious memory, the learned have been kept pretty much at a distance. A jockey, or a laced player, supplies the place of the scholar, poet, or the man of virtue. Those conversations, once the result of wisdom, wit, and innocence, are now turned to humbler topics, little more being expected from a companion than a laced coat, a pliant bow, and an immoderate friendship for——a well-served table.

Wit, when neglected by the great, is generally despised by the vulgar. Those who are unacquainted with the world, are apt to fancy the man of wit as leading a very agreeable life. They conclude, perhaps, that he is attended to with silent admiration, and dictates to the rest of mankind with all the eloquence of conscious superiority. Very different is his present situation. He is called an author, and all know that an author is a thing only to be laughed at. His person, not his jest, becomes the mirth of the company. At his approach, the most fat unthinking face brightens into malicious meaning. Even aldermen laugh, and revenge on him the ridicule which was lavished on their forefathers:

Etiam victis redit in præcordia virtus,
Victoresque cadunt.

It is indeed a reflection somewhat mortifying to the author, who breaks his ranks, and singles out for public favour, to think that he must combat contempt before he can arrive at glory. That he must expect to have all the fools

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of society united against him, before he can hope for the applause of the judicious. For this, however, he must prepare beforehand; as those who have no idea of the difficulty of his employment, will be apt to regard his inactivity as idleness, and not having a notion of the pangs of uncomplying thought in themselves, it is not to be expected they should have any desire of rewarding it in others.

Voltaire has finely described the hardships a man must encounter who writes for the public. I need make no apology for the length of the quotation.

« Your fate, my dear Le Fevre, is too strongly marked to permit your retiring. The bee must toil in making honey, the silk-worm must spin, the philosopher must dissect them, and you are born to sing of their labours. You must be a poet and a scholar, even though your inclinations should resist: nature is too strong for inclination. But hope not, my friend, to find tranquillity in the employment you are going to pursue. The route of genius is not less obstructed with disappointment than that of ambition.

« If you have the misfortune not to excel in your profession as a poet, repentance must tincture all your future enjoyments: if you succeed, you make enemies. You tread a narrow path. Contempt on one side, and hatred on the other, are ready to seize you upon the slightest deviation.

« But why must I be hated, you will perhaps reply; why must I be persecuted for having written a pleasing poem, for having produced an applauded tragedy, or for otherwise instructing or amusing mankind or myself?

« My dear friend, these very successes shall render you miserable for life. Let me suppose your performance has merit; let me suppose you have surmounted the teasing employments of printing and publishing; how will you be

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able to lull the critics, who, like Cerberus, are posted at all the avenues of literature, and who settle the merits of every new performance? How, I say, will you be able to make them open in your favour? There are always three or four literary journals in France, as many in Holland, each supporting opposite interests. The booksellers who guide these periodical compilations, find their account in being severe; the authors employed by them have wretchedness to add to their natural malignity. The majority may be in your favour, but you may depend on being torn by the rest. Loaded with unmerited scurrility, perhaps you reply; they rejoin; both plead at the bar of the public, and both are condemned to ridicule.

« But if you write for the stage, your case is still more worthy compassion. You are there to be judged by men whom the custom of the times has rendered contemptible. Irritated by their own inferiority, they exert all their little tyranny upon you, revenging upon the author the insults they receive from the public. From such men, then, you are to expect your sentence. Suppose your piece admitted, acted: one single ill-natured jest from the pit is sufficient to cancel all your labours. But allowing that it succeeds. There are a hundred squibs flying all abroad to prove that it should not have succeeded. You shall find your brightest scenes burlesqued by the ignorant; and the learned, who know a little Greek, and nothing of their native language, affect to despise you.

« But perhaps, with a panting heart, you carry your piece before a woman of quality. She gives the labours of your brain to her maid to be cut into shreds for curling her hair; while the laced footman, who carries the gaudy livery of luxury, insults your appearance, who bear the livery of indigence.

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« But granting your excellence has at last forced envy to confess that your works have some merit; this then is all the reward you can expect while living. However, for this tribute of applause, you must expect persecution. You will be reputed the author of scandal which you have never seen, of verses you despise, and of sentiments directly contrary to your own. In short, you must embark in some one party, or all parties will be against you.

« There are among us a number of learned societies, where a lady presides, whose wit begins to twinkle when the splendour of her beauty begins to decline. One or two men of learning compose her ministers of state. These must be flattered, or made enemies by being neglected. Thus, though you had the merit of all antiquity united in your person, you grow old in misery and disgrace. Every place designed for men of letters is filled up by men of intrigue. Some nobleman's private tutor, some court flatterer, shall bear away the prize, and leave you to anguish and to disappointment. »

Yet it were well if none but the dunces of society were combined to render the profession of an author ridiculous or unhappy. Men of the first eminence are often found to indulge this illiberal vein of raillery. Two contending writers often, by the opposition of their wit, render their profession contemptible in the eyes of ignorant persons, who should have been taught to admire. And yet, whatever the reader may think of himself, it is at least two to one but he is a greater blockhead than the most scribbling dunce he affects to despise.

The poet's poverty is a standing topic of contempt. His writing for bread is an unpardonable offence. Perhaps of all mankind an author in these times is used most hardly. We keep him poor, and yet revile his poverty. Like angry

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parents who correct their children till they cry, and then correct them for crying, we reproach him for living by his wit, and yet allow him no other means to live.

His taking refuge in garrets and cellars, has of late been violently objected to him, and that by men who I dare hope are more apt to pity than insult his distress. Is poverty the writer's fault? No doubt he knows how to prefer a bottle of champagne to the nectar of the neighbouring alehouse, or a venison pasty to a plate of potatoes. Want of delicacy is not in him but in us, who deny him the opportunity of making an elegant choice.

Wit certainly is the property of those who have it, nor should we be displeased if it is the only property a man sometimes has. We must not underrate him who uses it for subsistence, and flies from the ingratitude of the age even to a bookseller for redress. If the profession of an author is to be laughed at by the stupid, it is certainly better to be contemptibly rich than contemptibly poor. For all the wit that ever adorned the human mind, will at present no more shield the author's poverty from ridicule, than his high-topped gloves conceal the unavoidable omissions of his laundress.

To be more serious, new fashions, follies, and vices, make new monitors necessary in every age. An author may be considered as a merciful substitute to the legislature. He acts not by punishing crimes, but preventing them. However virtuous the present age, there may be still growing employment for ridicule or reproof, for persuasion or satire. If the author be therefore still so necessary among us, let us treat him with proper consideration as a child of the public, not a rent-charge on the community. And indeed a *child* of the public he is in all respects; for while so well able to direct others, how incapable is he

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frequently found of guiding himself! His simplicity exposes him to all the insidious approaches of cunning; his sensibility, to the slightest invasions of contempt. Though possessed of fortitude to stand unmoved the expected bursts of an earthquake, yet of feelings so exquisitely poignant as to agonize under the slightest disappointment. Broken rest, tasteless meals, and causeless anxiety, shorten his life, or render it unfit for active employment: prolonged vigils and intense application still further contract his span, and make his time glide insensibly away. Let us not, then, aggravate those natural inconveniences by neglect; we have had sufficient instances of this kind already. Sale and Moore will suffice for one age at least. But they are dead, and their sorrows are over. The neglected author of the Persian eclogues, which, however inaccurate, excel any in our language, is still alive,—happy, if *insensible* of our neglect, not *raging* at our ingratitude.[1] It is enough that the age has already produced instances of men pressing foremost in the lists of fame, and worthy of better times; schooled by continued adversity into a hatred of their kind; flying from thought to drunkenness; yielding to the united pressure of labour, penury, and sorrow; sinking unheeded, without one friend to drop a tear on their unattended obsequies, and indebted to charity for a grave.

The author, when unpatronized by the great, has naturally recourse to the bookseller. There cannot be perhaps imagined a combination more prejudicial to taste than this. It is the interest of the one to allow as little for writing, and of the other to write as much, as possible. Accordingly, tedious compilations and periodical magazines are the result of their joint endeavours. In these circumstances, the

[1] Our author here alludes to the insanity of Collins.

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author bids adieu to fame, writes for bread, and for that only imagination is seldom called in. He sits down to address the venal muse with the most phlegmatic apathy; and, as we are told of the Russian, courts his mistress by falling asleep in her lap. His reputation never spreads in a wider circle than that of the trade, who generally value him, not for the fineness of his compositions, but the quantity he works off in a given time.

A long habit of writing for bread thus turns the ambition of every author at last into avarice. He finds that he has written many years, that the public are scarcely acquainted even with his name; he despairs of applause, and turns to profit which invites him. He finds that money procures all those advantages, that respect, and that ease, which he vainly expected from fame. Thus the man who, under the protection of the great, might have done honour to humanity, when only patronized by the bookseller, becomes a thing little superiour to the fellow who works at the press.

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CHAPTER X.

Of the Marks of Literary Decay in France and England.

The faults already mentioned are such as learning is often found to flourish under; but there is one of a much more dangerous nature, which has begun to fix itself among us. I mean criticism, which may properly be called the natural destroyer of polite learning. We have seen that critics, or those whose only business is to write books upon other books, are always more numerous, as learning is more diffused; and experience has shown, that instead of promoting its interest, which they profess to do, they generally injure it. This decay which criticism produces may be deplored, but can scarcely be remedied, as the man who writes against the critics is obliged to add himself to the number. Other depravations in the republic of letters, such as affectation in some popular writer leading others into vicious imitation; political struggles in the state; a depravity of morals among the people; ill-directed encouragement, or no encouragement from the great,—these have been often found to co-operate in the decline of literature; and it has sometimes declined, as in modern Italy, without them; but an increase of criticism has always portended a decay. Of all misfortunes therefore in the commonwealth of letters, this of judging from rule, and not from feeling,

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is the most severe. At such a tribunal no work of original merit can please. Sublimity, if carried to an exalted height, approaches burlesque, and humour sinks into vulgarity. The person who cannot feel may ridicule both as such, and bring rules to corroborate his assertion. There is, in short, no excellence in writing that such judges may not place among the neighbouring defects. Rules render the reader more difficult to be pleased, and abridge the author's power of pleasing.

If we turn to either country, we shall perceive evident symptoms of this natural decay beginning to appear. Upon a moderate calculation, there seems to be as many volumes of criticism published in those countries, as of all other kinds of polite erudition united. Paris sends forth not less than four literary journals every month, the *Année Littéraire* and the *Feuille* by Freron, the *Journal Étranger* by the Chevalier D'Arc, and *Le Mercure* by Marmontel. We have two literary reviews in London, with critical newspapers and magazines without number. The compilers of these resemble the commoners of Rome; they are all for levelling property, not by increasing their own, but by diminishing that of others. The man who has any good-nature in his disposition must, however, be somewhat displeased to see distinguished reputations often the sport of ignorance,—to see, by one false pleasantry, the future peace of a worthy man's life disturbed, and this only, because he has unsuccessfully attempted to instruct or amuse us. Though ill-nature is far from being wit, yet it is generally laughed at as such: The critic enjoys the triumph, and ascribes to his parts what is only due to his effrontery. I fire with indignation, when I see persons wholly destitute of education and genius indent to the press, and thus turn book-makers, adding to the sin of criticism the sin of

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ignorance also; whose trade is a bad one, and who are bad workmen in the trade.

When I consider those industrious men as indebted to the works of others for a precarious subsistence, when I see them coming down at stated intervals to rummage the bookseller's counter for materials to work upon, it raises a smile though mixed with pity. It reminds me of an animal called by naturalists the soldier. This little creature, says the historian, is passionately fond of a shell, but not being supplied with one by nature, has recourse to the deserted shell of some other. I have seen these harmless reptiles, continues he, come down once a-year from the mountains, rank and file, cover the whole shore, and ply busily about, each in quest of a shell to please it. Nothing can be more amusing than their industry upon this occasion. One shell is too big, another too little: they enter and keep possession sometimes for a good while, until one is, at last, found entirely to please. When all are thus properly equipped, they march up again to the mountains, and live in their new acquisition till under a necessity of changing.

There is indeed scarcely an error of which our present writers are guilty, that does not arise from their opposing systems; there is scarcely an error that criticism cannot be brought to excuse. From this proceeds the affected security of our odes, the tuneless flow of our blank verse, the pompous epithet, laboured diction, and every other deviation from common sense, which procures the poet the applause of the month: he is praised by all, read by a few, and soon forgotten.

There never was an unbeaten path trodden by the poet that the critic did not endeavour to reclaim him, by calling his attempt innovation. This might be instanced in Dante,

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who first followed nature, and was persecuted by the critics as long as he lived. Thus novelty, one of the greatest beauties in poetry, must be avoided, or the connoisseur be displeased. It is one of the chief privileges, however, of genius, to fly from the herd of imitators by some happy singularity; for should he stand still, his heavy pursuers will at length certainly come up, and fairly dispute the victory.

The ingenious Mr Hogarth used to assert, that every one except the connoisseur was a judge of painting. The same may be asserted of writing: the public, in general, set the whole piece in the proper point of view; the critic lays his eye close to all its minuteness, and condemns or approves in detail. And this may be the reason why so many writers at present are apt to appeal from the tribunal of criticism to that of the people.

From a desire in the critic, of grafting the spirit of ancient languages upon the English, have proceeded, of late, several disagreeable instances of pedantry. Among the number, I think we may reckon blank verse. Nothing but the greatest sublimity of subject can render such a measure pleasing; however, we now see it used upon the most trivial occasions. It has particularly found its way into our didactic poetry, and is likely to bring that species of composition into disrepute for which the English are deservedly famous.

Those who are acquainted with writing, know that our language runs almost naturally into blank verse. The writers of our novels, romances, and all of this class who have no notion of style, naturally hobble into this unharmonious measure. If rhymes, therefore, be more difficult, for that very reason I would have our poets write in rhyme. Such a restriction upon the thought of a good

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poet, often lifts and increases the vehemence of every sentiment; for fancy, like a fountain, plays highest by diminishing the aperture. But rhymes, it will be said, are a remnant of monkish stupidity, an innovation upon the poetry of the ancients. They are but indifferently acquainted with antiquity who make the assertion. Rhymes are probably of older date than either the Greek or Latin dactyl and spondee. The Celtic, which is allowed to be the first language spoken in Europe, has ever preserved them, as we may find in the Edda of Iceland, and the Irish carols, still sung among the original inhabitants of that island. Olaus Wormius gives us some of the Teutonic poetry in this way; and Pontoppidan, bishop of Bergen, some of the Norwegian. In short, this jingle of sounds is almost natural to mankind, at least it is so to our language, if we may judge from many unsuccessful attempts to throw it off.

I should not have employed so much time in opposing this erroneous innovation, if it were not apt to introduce another in its train; I mean, a disgusting solemnity of manner into our poetry; and, as the prose writer has been ever found to follow the poet, it must consequently banish in both all that agreeable trifling, which, if I may so express it, often deceives us into instruction. The finest sentiment and the most weighty truth may put on a pleasant face, and it is even virtuous to jest when serious advice must be disgusting. But instead of this, the most trifling performance among us now assumes all the didactic stiffness of wisdom. The most diminutive son of fame or of famine has his *we* and his *us*, his *firstlys* and his *secondlys*, as methodical as if bound in cow-hide and closed with clasps of brass. Were these monthly reviews and magazines frothy, pert, or absurd, they might find some pardon;

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but to be dull and dronish is an encroachment on the prerogative of a folio. These things should be considered as pills to purge melancholy; they should be made up in our splenetic climate to be taken as physic, and not so as to be used when we take it.

However, by the power of one single monosyllable, our critics have almost got the victory over humour amongst us. Does the poet paint the absurdities of the vulgar, then he is *low;* does he exaggerate the features of folly, to render it more thoroughly ridiculous, he is then very *low.* In short, they have proscribed the comic or satirical muse from every walk but high life, which, though abounding in fools as well as the humblest station, is by no means so fruitful in absurdity. Among well-bred fools we may despise much, but have little to laugh at; nature seems to present us with a universal blank of silk, ribands, smiles, and whispers. Absurdity is the poet's game, and good-breeding is the nice concealment of absurdities. The truth is, the critic generally mistakes humour for wit, which is a very different excellence. Wit raises human nature above its level; humour acts a contrary part, and equally depresses it. To expect exalted humour is a contradiction in terms; and the critic, by demanding an impossibility from the comic poet, has, in effect, banished new comedy from the stage. But, to put the same thought in a different light, when an unexpected similitude in two objects strikes the imagination; in other words, when a thing is *wittily* expressed, all our pleasure turns into admiration of the artist, who had fancy enough to draw the picture. When a thing is *humorously* described, our burst of laughter proceeds from a very different cause; we compare the absurdity of the character represented with our own, and triumph in our conscious superiority. No natu-

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ral defect can be a cause of laughter, because it is a misfortune to which ourselves are liable. A defect of this kind changes the passion into pity or horror. We only laugh at those instances of moral absurdity, to which we are conscious we ourselves are not liable. For instance, should I describe a man as wanting his nose, there is no humour in this, as it is an accident to which human nature is subject, and may be any man's case; but should I represent this man without his nose as extremely curious in the choice of his snuff-box, we here see him guilty of an absurdity of which we imagine it impossible for ourselves to be guilty, and therefore applaud our own good sense on the comparison. Thus, then, the pleasure we receive from wit turns on the admiration of another; that which we feel from humour, centres in the admiration of ourselves. The poet, therefore, must place the object he would have the subject of humour in a state of inferiority; in other words, the subject of humour must be low.

The solemnity worn by many of our modern writers, is, I fear, often the mask of dulness; for certain it is, it seems to fit every author who pleases to put it on. By the complexion of many of our late publications, one might be apt to cry out with Cicero, *Civem mehercule non puto esse qui his temporibus ridere possit:* on my conscience, I believe we have all forgot to laugh in these days. Such writers probably make no distinction between what is praised and what is pleasing; between those commendations which the reader pays his own discernment, and those which are the genuine result of his sensations. It were to be wished, therefore, that we no longer found pleasure with the inflated style that has for some years been looked upon as fine writing, and which every young writer is now obliged to adopt, if he chooses to be read. We should now dis-

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pense with loaded epithet and dressing up trifles with dignity. For, to use an obvious instance, it is not those who make the greatest noise with their wares in the streets that have most to sell. Let us, instead of writing finely, try to write naturally; not hunt after lofty expressions to deliver mean ideas, nor be for ever gaping, when we only mean to deliver a whisper.

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CHAPTER XI.

Of the Stage.

Our Theatre has been generally confessed to share in this general decline, though partaking of the show and decoration of the Italian opera with the propriety and declamation of French performance. The stage also is more magnificent with us than any other in Europe, and the people in general fonder of theatrical entertainment. Yet still as our pleasures, as well as more important concerns, are generally managed by party, the state has felt its influence. The managers, and all who espouse their side, are for decoration and ornament; the critic, and all who have studied French decorum, are for regularity and declamation. Thus it is almost impossible to please both parties; and the poet, by attempting it, finds himself often incapable of pleasing either. If he introduces stage pomp, the critic consigns his performance to the vulgar; if he indulges in recital and simplicity, it is accused of insipidity, or dry affectation.

From the nature, therefore, of our theatre, and the genius of our country, it is extremely difficult for a dramatic poet to please his audience. But happy would he be, were these the only difficulties he had to encounter; there are many other more dangerous combinations against the little

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wit of the age. Our poet's performance must undergo a process truly chemical before it is presented to the public. It must be tried in the manager's fire, strained through a licenser, suffer from repeated corrections, till it may be a mere *caput mortuum* when it arrives before the public.

The success, however, of pieces upon the stage would be of little moment, did it not influence the success of the same piece in the closet. Nay, I think it would be more for the interests of virtue, if stage performances were read, not acted; made rather our companions in the cabinet than on the theatre. While we are readers, every moral sentiment strikes us in all its beauty, but the love scenes are frigid, tawdry, and disgusting. When we are spectators, all the persuasives to vice receive an additional lustre. The love scene is aggravated, the obscenity heightened, the best actors figure in the most debauched characters, while the parts of morality, as they are called, are thrown to some mouthing machine, who puts even virtue out of countenance by his wretched imitation.

But whatever be the incentives to vice which are found at the theatre, public pleasures are generally less guilty than solitary ones. To make our solitary satisfactions truly innocent, the actor is useful, as by his means the poet's work makes its way from the stage to the closet; for all must allow, that the reader receives more benefit by perusing a well-written play, than by seeing it acted.

But how is this rule inverted on our theatres at present? Old pieces are revived, and scarcely any new ones admitted. The actor is ever in our eye, and the poet seldom permitted to appear; the public are again obliged to ruminate over those hashes of absurdity, which were disgusting to our ancestors even in an age of ignorance; and the

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stage, instead of serving the people, is made subservient to the interests of avarice.

We seem to be pretty much in the situation of travellers at a Scotch inn;—vile entertainment is served up, complained of, and sent down; up comes worse, and that also is changed; and every change makes our wretched cheer more unsavoury. What must be done? only sit down contented, cry up all that comes before us, and admire even the absurdities of Shakspeare.

Let the reader suspend his censure. I admire the beauties of this great father of our stage as much as they deserve, but could wish, for the honour of our country, and for his honour too, that many of his scenes were forgotten. A man blind of one eye should always be painted in profile. Let the spectator, who assists at any of these newly-revived pieces, only ask himself whether he would approve such a performance if written by a modern poet? I fear he will find that much of his applause proceeds merely from the sound of a name, and an empty veneration for antiquity. In fact, the revival of those pieces of forced humour, far-fetched conceit, and unnatural hyperbole, which have been ascribed to Shakspeare, is rather gibbeting than raising a statue to his memory; it is rather a trick of the actor, who thinks it safest acting in exaggerated characters, and who, by outstepping nature, chooses to exhibit the ridiculous *outré* of a harlequin under the sanction of that venerable name.

What strange vamped comedies, farcical tragedies, or what shall I call them, speaking pantomimes, have we not of late seen? No matter what the play may be, it is the actor who draws an audience. He throws life into all; all are in spirits and merry, in at one door and out at

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another; the spectator, in a fool's paradise, knows not what all this means, till the last act concludes in matrimony. The piece pleases our critics, because it talks old English; and it pleases the galleries, because it has ribaldry. True taste or even common sense are out of the question.

But great art must be sometimes used before they can thus impose upon the public. To this purpose, a prologue written with some spirit generally precedes the piece, to inform us that it was composed by Shakspeare, or old Ben, or somebody else who took them for his model. A face of iron could not have the assurance to avow dislike; the theatre has its partisans who understand the force of combinations, trained up to vociferation, clapping of hands and clattering of sticks: and though a man might have strength sufficient to overcome a lion in single combat, he may run the risk of being devoured by an army of ants.

I am not insensible, that third nights are disagreeable drawbacks upon the annual profits of the stage. I am confident it is much more to the manager's advantage to furbish up all the lumber which the good sense of our ancestors, but for his care, had consigned to oblivion. It is not with him, therefore, but with the public I would expostulate; they have a right to demand respect, and surely those newly-revived plays are no instances of the manager's deference.

I have been informed that no new play can be admitted upon our theatres unless the author chooses to wait some years, or, to use the phrase in fashion, till it comes to be played in turn. A poet thus can never expect to contract a familiarity with the stage, by which alone he can hope to succeed; nor can the most signal success relieve immediate want. Our Saxon ancestors had but one name for a wit and a witch. I will not dispute the propriety of

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uniting those characters then; but the man who, under the present discouragements, ventures to write for the stage, whatever claim he may have to the appellation of a wit, at least he has no right to be called a conjuror.

From all that has been said upon the state of our theatre, we may easily foresee whether it is likely to improve or decline; and whether the free-born muse can bear to submit to those restrictions which avarice or power would impose. For the future, it is somewhat unlikely, that he whose labours are valuable, or who knows their value, will turn to the stage for either fame or subsistence, when he must at once flatter an actor and please an audience.

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CHAPTER XII.

On Universities.

INSTEAD of losing myself in a subject of such extent, I shall only offer a few thoughts as they occur, and leave their connexion to the reader.

We seem divided, whether an education formed by travelling or by a sedentary life be preferable. We see more of the world by travel, but more of human nature by remaining at home; as in an infirmary, the student, who only attends to the disorders of a few patients, is more likely to understand his profession, than he who indiscriminately examines them all.

A youth just landed at the Brille resembles a clown at a puppet-show; carries his amazement from one miracle to another; from this cabinet of curiosities to that collection of pictures: but wondering is not the way to grow wise.

Whatever resolutions we set ourselves, not to keep company with our countrymen abroad, we shall find them broken when once we leave home. Among strangers we consider ourselves as in a solitude, and it is but natural to desire society.

In all the great towns of Europe there are to be found

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Englishmen residing either from interest or choice. These generally lead a life of continued debauchery. Such are the countrymen a traveller is likely to meet with.

This may be the reason why Englishmen are all thought to be mad or melancholy by the vulgar abroad. Their money is giddily and merrily spent among sharpers of their own country; and when that is gone, of all nations the English bear worst that disorder called the *maladie de poche*.

Countries wear very different appearances to travellers of different circumstances. A man who is whirled through Europe in a post-chaise, and the pilgrim who walks the grand tour on foot, will form very different conclusions.[1]

To see Europe with advantage, a man should appear in various circumstances of fortune; but the experiment would be too dangerous for young men.

There are many things relative to other countries which can be learned to more advantage at home; their laws and policies are among the number.

The greatest advantages which result to youth from travel, are an easy address, the shaking off national prejudices, and the finding nothing ridiculous in national peculiarities.

The time spent in these acquisitions could have been more usefully employed at home. An education in a college seems therefore preferable.

We attribute to universities either too much or too little. Some assert that they are the only proper places to advance learning; while others deny even their utility in forming an education. Both are erroneous.

[1] In the first edition our author added, *Haud inexpertus loquor*; for he travelled through France, etc. on foot.

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Learning is most advanced in populous cities, where chance often conspires with industry to promote it: where the members of this large university, if I may so call it, catch manners as they rise, study life not logic, and have the world for correspondents.

The greatest number of universities have ever been founded in times of the greatest ignorance.

New improvements in learning are seldom adopted in colleges until admitted every where else. And this is right; we should always be cautious of teaching the rising generation uncertainties for truth. Thus, though the professors in universities have been too frequently found to oppose the advancement of learning; yet when once established, they are the properest persons to diffuse it.

There is more knowledge to be acquired from one page of the volume of mankind, if the scholar only knows how to read, than in volumes of antiquity. We grow learned, not wise, by too long a continuance at college.

This points out the time at which we should leave the university. Perhaps the age of twenty-one, when at our universities the first degree is generally taken, is the proper period.

The universities of Europe may be divided into three classes. Those upon the old scholastic establishment, where the pupils are immured, talk nothing but Latin, and support every day syllogistical disputations in school-philosophy. Would not one be apt to imagine this was the proper education to make a man a fool? Such are the universities of Prague, Louvain, and Padua. The second is, where the pupils are under few restrictions, where all scholastic jargon is banished, where they take a degree when they think proper, and live not in the college but the city. Such are Edinburgh, Leyden, Gottingen,

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Geneva. The third is a mixture of the two former, where the pupils are restrained but not confined; where many, though not all, of the absurdities of scholastic philosophy are suppressed, and where the first degree is taken after four years' matriculation. Such are Oxford, Cambridge, and Dublin.

As for the first class, their absurdities are too apparent to admit of a parallel. It is disputed which of the two last are more conducive to national improvement.

Skill in the professions is acquired more by practice than study; two or three years may be sufficient for learning their rudiments. The universities of Edinburgh, etc. grant a license for practising them when the student thinks proper, which our universities refuse till after a residence of several years.

The dignity of the professions may be supported by this dilatory proceeding; but many men of learning are thus too long excluded from the lucrative advantages which superiour skill has a right to expect.

Those universities must certainly be most frequented which promise to give in two years the advantages which others will not under twelve.

The man who has studied a profession for three years, and practised it for nine more, will certainly know more of his business than he who has only studied it for twelve.

The universities of Edinburgh, etc. must certainly be most proper for the study of those professions in which men choose to turn their learning to profit as soon as possible.

The universities of Oxford, etc. are improper for this, since they keep the student from the world, which, after a certain time, is the only true school of improvement.

When a degree in the professions can be taken only by

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men of independent fortunes, the number of candidates in learning is lessened, and consequently the advancement of learning retarded.

This slowness of conferring degrees is a remnant of scholastic barbarity. Paris, Louvain, and those universities which still retain their ancient institutions, confer the doctor's degree slower even than we.

The statutes of every university should be considered as adapted to the laws of its respective government. Those should alter as these happen to fluctuate.

Four years spent in the arts (as they are called in colleges) is perhaps laying too laborious a foundation. Entering a profession without any previous acquisitions of this kind, is building too bold a superstructure.

Teaching by lecture, as at Edinburgh, may make men scholars, if they think proper; but instructing by examination, as at Oxford, will make them so often against their inclination.

Edinburgh only disposes the student to receive learning; Oxford often makes him actually learned.

In a word, were I poor, I should send my son to Leyden or Edinburgh, though the annual expense in each, particularly in the first, is very great. Were I rich, I would send him to one of our own universities. By an education received in the first, he has the best likelihood of living; by that received in the latter, he has the best chance of becoming great.

We have of late heard much of the necessity of studying oratory. Vespasian was the first who paid professors of rhetoric for publicly instructing youth at Rome. However, those pedants never made an orator.

The best orations that ever were spoken were pro-

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nounced in the parliaments of King Charles the First. These men never studied the rules of oratory.

Mathematics are, perhaps, too much studied at our universities. This seems a science to which the meanest intellects are equal. I forget who it is that says, «All men might understand mathematics if they would.»

The most methodical manner of lecturing, whether on morals or nature, is first rationally to explain, and then produce the experiment. The most instructive method is to show the experiment first; curiosity is then excited, and attention awakened to every subsequent deduction. Hence it is evident, that in a well formed education a course of history should ever precede a course of ethics.

The sons of our nobility are permitted to enjoy greater liberties in our universities than those of private men. I should blush to ask the men of learning and virtue who preside in our seminaries the reason of such a prejudicial distinction. Our youth should there be inspired with a love of philosophy; and the first maxim among philosophers is, That merit only makes distinction.

Whence has proceeded the vain magnificence of expensive architecture in our colleges? Is it that men study to more advantage in a palace than in a cell? One single performance of taste or genius confers more real honours on its parent university than all the labours of the chisel.

Surely pride itself has dictated to the fellows of our colleges the absurd passion of being attended at meals, and on other public occasions, by those poor men who, willing to be scholars, come in upon some charitable foundation. It implies a contradiction, for men to be at once learning the *liberal* arts, and at the same time treated as *slaves*; at once studying freedom, and practising servitude.

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CHAPTER XIII.

The Conclusion.

Every subject acquires an adventitious importance to him who considers it with application. He finds it more closely connected with human happiness than the rest of mankind are apt to allow; he sees consequences resulting from it which do not strike others with equal conviction; and still pursuing speculation beyond the bounds of reason, too frequently becomes ridiculously earnest in trifles or absurdity.

It will perhaps be incurring this imputation, to deduce a universal degeneracy of manners from so slight an origin as the depravation of taste; to assert that, as a nation grows dull, it sinks into debauchery. Yet such probably may be the consequence of literary decay; or, not to stretch the thought beyond what it will bear, vice and stupidity are always mutually productive of each other.

Life, at the greatest and best, has been compared to a froward child, that must be humoured and played with till it falls asleep, and then all the care is over. Our few years are laboured away in varying its pleasures; new amusements are pursued with studious attention; the most childish vanities are dignified with titles of importance; and the proudest boast of the most aspiring philo-

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sopher is no more, than that he provides his little playfellows the greatest pastime with the greatest innocence.

Thus the mind, ever wandering after amusement, when abridged of happiness on one part, endeavours to find it on another; when intellectual pleasures are disagreeable, those of sense will take the lead. The man who in this age is enamoured of the tranquil joys of study and retirement, may in the next, should learning be fashionable no longer, feel an ambition of being foremost at a horse-course; or, if such could be the absurdity of the times, of being himself a jockey. Reason and appetite are therefore masters of our revels in turn; and as we incline to the one, or pursue the other, we rival angels, or imitate the brutes. In the pursuit of intellectual pleasure lies every virtue; of sensual, every vice.

It is this difference of pursuit which marks the morals and characters of mankind; which lays the line between the enlightened philosopher and the half-taught citizen; between the civil citizen and illiterate peasant; between the law-obeying peasant and the wandering savage of Africa, an animal less mischievous indeed than the tiger, because endued with fewer powers of doing mischief. The man, the nation, must therefore be good, whose chiefest luxuries consist in the refinement of reason; and reason can never be universally cultivated, unless guided by taste, which may be considered as the link between science and common sense, the medium through which learning should ever be seen by society.

Taste will therefore often be a proper standard, when others fail, to judge of a nation's improvement or degeneracy in morals. We have often no permanent characteristics, by which to compare the virtues or the vices of our ancestors with our own. A generation may rise and

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pass away without leaving any traces of what it really was; and all complaints of our deterioration may be only topics of declamation or the cavillings of disappointment: but in taste we have standing evidence; we can with precision compare the literary performances of our fathers with our own, and from their excellence or defects determine the moral, as well as the literary, merits of either.

If, then, there ever comes a time when taste is so far depraved among us that critics shall load every work of genius with unnecessary comment, and quarter their empty performances with the substantial merits of an author, both for subsistence and applause; if there comes a time when censure shall speak in storms, but praise be whispered in the breeze, while real excellence often finds shipwreck in either; if there be a time when the Muse shall seldom be heard, except in plaintive elegy, as if she wept her own decline, while lazy compilations supply the place of original thinking; should there ever be such a time, may succeeding critics, both for the honour of our morals, as well as our learning, say, that such a period bears no resemblance to the present age!

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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